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CHRISTIANITY DEMONSTRATED BY EXPERIENCE.

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CHRISTIANITY

DEMONSTRATED BY EXPERIENCE:

PRESENTING

THE TESTIMONY OF ITS CONVERTS,

FROM VARIOUS

RANKS, CONDITIONS AND PREVIOUS OPINIONS,

IN ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD.

BY JAMES PORTER, D.D.,

AUTHOR OF "REVIVALS OF RELIGION," "WINNING WORKER." "HINTS TO SELF-EDUCATED MINISTERS," ETC., ETC.

"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God."—JOHN vii. 17

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INTRODUCTION.

THE object of this work is to present a method of proving the truth of God's word which is available to all classes. The ordinary processes of reasoning on the subject, are too elaborate for the masses, however satisfactory to more intelligent readers. But Christianity provides for all ranks and conditions of people in a most remarkable way, so that whosoever will, may test it for himself, and be assured that it is from God. In divulging its plan, we have stated what the gospel proposes to do for man in several particulars, and on what conditions, and then introduced witnesses who testify that they have personally tried it and found it true against their strongest convictions to the contrary. And what gives special force to their testimony is, that they were strangers to one another,—from all parts of the world, having been trained in different languages and religions, and represent various grades of society, ranging from the highest culture to the lowest degradation. In these circumstances there was no possible chance for collusion. Every one acted for and by himself, in some cases without having heard one word on the

subject before, and yet all came to the same conclusion, showing the *oneness* of the Christian religion, whenever and by whomsoever embraced and enjoyed, as well as its divine origin and authority.

These testimonies, however, reveal some differences which other inquirers may turn to good account. Not in the plan, or in God, or the atonement, but in the feelings, opinions and measures of their subjects. No two persons approach the work with exactly the same convictions of their spiritual condition,—the same estimate of the measures proposed or the evidence of success to be achieved. We have yet to find the first genuine convert to Christ, who did not make some new discoveries on all these points, after he committed himself to the undertaking. These experiences present nearly every phase of difficulty involved, and may be of great service to seekers who are ready to faint by the way. Most real penitents think their own cases exceptionally difficult. Many easily see how others can be saved while they despair of themselves. And if we are not deceived, these testimonies may be used to bring many who are now far from God to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus.

We cherish hope of their usefulness, too, in another direction. They are genuine specimens of scriptural conversion, sometimes called "the new birth." With many, this grand transformation of heart and life by the Holy Spirit is construed to be a

mere change of opinion, purpose or position to be consummated by baptism, absolution or joining the church, without repentance toward God, or obedient faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The result is, some churches are being filled with worldly and frivolous professors, whose general spirit and deportment differ very little from what is common among respectable unbelievers. To our apprehension, this is a fatal delusion. Conversion is a radical change of heart, which alienates its subjects from sin in all its forms, and weds them to God and his followers with profound affection. The experiences of this volume show the greatness of the work and the worthlessness of false professions.

Christians entertain different opinions regarding advancement in grace, after conversion. Many covet attainments which they deem beyond their reach, while others contemplate heights, exceeding abundantly above all that they dare to ask or think. Discussion helps to discover the truth on this point, but experience is more convincing. We have therefore introduced the testimony of several witnesses selected from different denominations, whose experiences may be read with profit. And, as the word of God teaches that sinners may reach a point in wickedness, beyond which there is no mercy for them, we have presented a few sad cases demonstrative of this alarming truth. Some of them are familiar to readers of religious books, but they need to be kept

before the public, as a warning to multitudes who know their duty, but still live in rebellion.

The work closes with an attempt to show the superior advantages of a life of piety. Taken as a whole, it vindicates the fundamental truths of religion against numerous forms of error, in a manner, we trust, to attract attention and produce conviction. May God make it a blessing to many.

THE AUTHOR.

BROOKLYN, N. Y., *March* 1, 1882.

CHRISTIANITY.

CHAPTER I.

CHRISTIANITY,—ITS ORIGIN, CLAIMS AND EARLY FORTUNES.

By Christianity we mean that system of religion which was promulgated by the Lord Jesus Christ, and is represented in the sacred books known as the Holy Scriptures. The exalted professions, and the remarkable promises which it makes to all who accept it, no less than its revelations concerning unbelievers, entitle it to our most careful and serious consideration. It does not assume to be entirely new, but rather to be an addition to former revelations from God, which it completes and perfects, absorbing the glory of the Mosaic religion, and presenting a perfect system of faith, morals and acceptable worship.

The first thing that strikes an intelligent inquirer, is the boldness of its claims. So far as the Jews were concerned, they had long been

looking for the coming of the Messiah foretold by their prophets, who should rule over them and lead them into all truth. But they believed that he would appear in grandeur and among their nobility, and naturally rejected Jesus, because of the obscurity and poverty of his birth. Yet he claimed to be the very Saviour for whom they were looking.

His heroism was not less manifest with regard to the Romans, and other nations subject to their power. They were idolaters, and worshipped innumerable gods. But he repudiated the whole of them as nothing, and insisted that there was but *one* God, and that he was the God of Abraham, Moses and the prophets, and the real author of the religion which he came to proclaim among all nations. This was the more remarkable because it was in glaring conflict with the prevailing policy of the times. When the Romans conquered a nation, they engrafted its gods and worship on their own systems of religion, so as to conciliate their new subjects. But Jesus proposed no such compromise. On the contrary, he rejected all pagan and idolatrous worship, and demanded entire obedience to his God and Father as the only

living and true God in the universe, asserting, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned."

Furthermore, the inventors of idols had adjusted their principles and requirements to accommodate the depraved tastes and dispositions of men, some better, but more very bad, answering well to Christian ideas of the devil. But Jesus recognized but one God, and assumed that he is perfectly holy, just and good, and requires nothing of any man but what is right, equitable and useful.

Looking at the subject in the light of these facts, the early prospects of Christianity were not very encouraging, and the assumption that it would overthrow the well-established religions of the day, and sooner or later become the religion of all nations, must have seemed to most minds perfectly preposterous. Yet, it immediately commanded attention, and found favor, first with the common people, and then with others, embracing some of its worst enemies, until it acquired a powerful influence over the then known world. Read the history of its early success in the Acts of the Apostles. "On

the fiftieth day after our Lord's crucifixion, three thousand persons were converted in Jerusalem by a single sermon of the apostles; and a few weeks after this, five thousand who believed were present at another sermon preached also in Jerusalem. . . . About eight or ten years after our Lord's death, the disciples had become so numerous at Jerusalem, and in the adjacent country, that they were objects of jealousy and alarm to Herod himself (Acts xii. 1). . . . It should be recollected, that the success of the gospel was not restricted to Judea; but it was preached in all the different provinces of the Roman empire. The first triumphs of Christianity were in the heart of Greece, the nursery of learning and the polite arts; for churches were planted at a very early period at Corinth, Ephesus, Berea, Thessalonica, and Philippi. Even Rome herself, the seat of wealth and empire, was not able to resist the force of truth at a time when the facts related were recent, and when they might, if they had been false, have easily been disproved. . . . Nor ought it to be forgotten that the religion to which such numbers were proselyted was an exclusive one. It denied without reserve, the

truth of every article of heathen mythology, and the existence of every object of their worship. . . . If it prevailed at all, it must prevail by the overthrow of every statue, altar, and temple in the world."—*R. Watson.*

Yet for all this, the evidence of the truth of Christianity was so clear and forcible, that men of rank, sense and learning embraced it, though they thereby sacrificed every worldly interest. Among them we find Nicodemus, and Joseph of Arimathea, members of the Senate of Israel; Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue; Zacheus, the chief of the publicans of Jericho; Apollos, distinguished for eloquence; Paul, learned in the Jewish law; Sergius Paulus, governor of the island of Cyprus; Cornelius, a Roman captain; Dionysius, a judge and senator of the Athenian areopagus; Erastus, treasurer of Corinth; Tyrannus, a teacher of grammar and rhetoric at Corinth; Publius, governor of Malta; Philemon, a person of considerable rank at Colosse; Simon, a noted sophist in Samaria; Zenas, a lawyer; and even the domestics of the emperor himself.—*Ibid.*

Speaking of the wonderful influence of Chris-

tianity at that period, and since, Bishop Porteus justly says:

"It has not always been so well understood, or so honestly practiced, as it ought to have been. . . . Yet, under all these disadvantages, it has gradually produced a visible change in those points which most materially concern the peace and quiet of the world. Its beneficent spirit has spread itself through all the different relations and modifications of life, and communicated its kindly influence to almost every public and private concern of mankind. It has insensibly worked itself into the inmost frame and constitution of civil states. It has given a tinge to the complexion of their governments, to the temper and administration of their laws. It has restrained the spirit of the prince and the madness of the people. It has softened the rigors of despotism and tamed the insolence of conquest. . . . It has descended into families; has diminished the pressure of tyranny; improved every domestic endearment; given tenderness to the parent, humanity to the master, respect to superiors, to inferiors ease; so that mankind are, upon the whole, even in a temporal view, under infinite obligations to the

mild and pacific temper of the gospel, and have reaped from it more substantial worldly benefits than from any other institution upon earth."

The ordinary arguments by which Christianity is proved to be of God, are conclusive with the few who have the time and intelligence to weigh them carefully. Assuming the existence of God, as the creator of man, it is reasonable to believe that he would reveal himself in some appreciable way. In what better way he could have done it than that which we find detailed in the holy Scriptures, it is difficult to conceive. Or how he could have substantiated his revelations by more appropriate means than those of prophecy and miracles, we are not informed. But we do know that these arguments, candidly examined, generally convince candid inquirers, though approached with hatred to the whole scheme, and by learned men who are fully committed to conflicting theories.

But the masses of people have no time or capacity to traverse these arguments, and are obliged to decide upon the merits of Christianity by what they see and hear. These means of information are not always sufficient to com-

mand their full confidence; but considering the tremendous interests involved in the subject, many are anxious to know more, and do something, if possible, to secure the benefits proposed, provided the system should turn out to be a proper statement of the facts in the case. This feeling is widespread, not only where the gospel is preached, but among the heathen, who generally have some idea of good or evil awaiting them in a future state of existence. Even many intelligent people who discard the Christian system, are more or less disturbed by its revelations.

Fortunately for the world the gospel provides for just this emergency. It prescribes a practical course of investigation, which comes within the reach of every one who has any light, and desires to know the truth. The promises of God are clear and comprehensive. Sinners, however guilty, who will test them by complying with their conditions, will find that they are true beyond their highest apprehensions. And this is strictly in accordance with the common sense of the world. A man offering fruit of a certain flavor for sale, does not go into an argument to prove the truth of his representations,

but says, "*taste* and see." All honest dealers want their claims tested. Christ says, "Come unto me and I will give you rest." There is no use in debating the question, that will not settle it. The only proper test is to "come."

This being so, there can be no solid ground for unbelief in the word of God, until it is actually proved false by faithful experiment, which is impossible. Unbelief is a matter of choice, and is therefore sin. "This is the condemnation," says Jesus, "that light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil." One who will not try the religion of Christ by the simple and harmless means proposed, ought to be ashamed to give an opinion on the subject, and yet many do so. Naaman was quite sure that the waters of Jordan were powerless to heal his leprosy, and that the prophet who prescribed them was a fraud, but being impressed with the reasoning of his servant, and seeing how easily he could settle the question and possibly save his life, he changed his course and tried the experiment, against his own convictions, and was healed. Tens of thousands

have imitated his wise example, and now know that God's word is true.

The object of this writing is to induce skeptics of every class to submit Christianity to the proper practical test.

CHAPTER II.

CHRISTIANITY,—ITS FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS AS REVEALED IN THE WORD OF GOD.

THE object of this chapter is more fully to indicate the principles, practices, purposes and emotions involved in a proper Christian character. Such an exhibition is necessary, because there are so many spurious religions abroad which embrace some truth, and seem to maintain religious worship. These are not demonstrable by argument, much less by experience, and, like the Pharisees of old, are the enemies of Christ, and the spiritual kingdom which he came to establish.

The theory of the Christian religion as we understand it, recognizes,

1. The God of the Bible as a *living*, almighty, intelligent and *personal* being, as great in his goodness as in his power, in opposition to Atheism, which denies the existence of any such character, and of Pantheism, which acknowledges no other God than the universe. One who assumes either of these positions,

shuts himself out from all experience of spiritual benefits, except it may be conviction of sin, which often comes unsought, even to infidels. Atheists are sometimes converted, but never until they renounce their old errors, so far as to submit to the teachings of the word of God. The same is true of Deists, who admit the existence of God, but discard the Bible as the revelation of his will. They flounder about in endless speculations, sometimes inculcate good moral sentiments, but never attain the nobility of Christian character without submitting to the claims of the Bible.

Nor have we known of much success among Pelagians in reforming themselves or others who believe in God the Father, but place less account on his Son Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost. Some of this class have been powerfully awakened and cried mightily to God for pardon, rejecting the agency of the Saviour and the Spirit, but we never knew one to find the desired object without acknowledging both. God insists on being respected and having his word respected, which he has proved by innumerable witnesses, and he cannot consistently indulge the pride and prejudice of sinners by

saving them on other terms than those which he has prescribed. He will not divide his honors with other gods,—the mother of Jesus, or any other person or thing; not even with the moral and benevolent sinner himself, however honestly deluded as to his own merits. His plan of redemption and salvation was arranged for *sinners*. And before the sinner can be saved, he must avail himself of its terms. So says the Bible, and it stands confirmed by the uniform experience of all who have tested it. God is willing to be *tried*, but insists on being trusted alone, when his claims are being tested. Hence, the heathen who have undertaken to add Him to their stock of gods have always failed to receive the benefits of the gospel. Nor have ideal philosophers, who have attempted to attach the gospel to their soulless systems succeeded better.

2. Another vital truth involved in Christianity, is that God exercises personal supervision over men, inspiring or restraining, blessing or cursing them as his fatherly sovereignty, and commingled mercy and justice shall require. Being a living and everywhere-present being, he is approachable in all places where it is proper

for his subjects to go. Hence they may feel assured of his sympathy and help in all times of need.

How different, therefore, is the Christian's God from the dead gods of human philosophy, which, like electricity, magnetism or gravitation, lurk everywhere, without sympathy, or respect for moral qualities! *He* can be "touched with the feeling of our infirmities"; they cannot. He is interested in our welfare, and can hear and help us; they are unconscious—the slaves of circumstances over which they have no control. "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven," says Jesus, "the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." Indeed, the Christian feels God to be nearer and dearer than any earthly friend. He can approach him with filial confidence and ask what he will, and know that he is loved and answered.

3. This suggests another element in our holy religion, namely, prayer. God will be inquired of to do all these things for us. (Ezek. xxxvi. 37.) Our guide-book is full of instruction on the subject. We are to "be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication

with thanksgiving let our requests be made known unto God." (Phil. iv. 6.) "They that wait upon the Lord (in this way) shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint." (Isa. xl. 31.) "Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." (Psa. l. 15.) The meaning is, that we shall be satisfied with his answer, and acknowledge it with thanksgiving.

4. Sincere readers of the Bible, for the purpose of ascertaining what it really teaches, and not to fortify themselves in some preconceived opinions, will readily perceive, too, *that man is a fallen*, depraved being. They will learn that Adam, the father of the race, having been created in the "image of God," "upright," fell by transgression, and involved himself and his progeny in moral corruption, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually, so that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and works, to faith and calling upon God; having no disposition or power to do good works,

pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God assisting him, that he may have a good will, and working with him when he has that good will. (Gen. i. 27; Eccl. vii. 29.)

5. That to redeem him from this ruined state, God made an arrangement by the death of His Son, Jesus Christ, whereby he can be just, and yet "the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus," by which the guilt of original sin, whatever it may be, is unconditionally covered, and is not imputed to any one until voluntarily assumed by the rejection of its remedy, thus provided. (Rom. v. 18.) And, whereby also, sinners, enslaved by their innate depravity and actual transgressions, are so endowed by the Holy Spirit, as to be able to choose the right and reject the wrong, and so believe and repent, as to be pardoned and renewed in the spirit of their minds, and love God and his service as really and consciously as they naturally love sin. (John iii. 3–5; Rom. v. 1, iv. 5.)

6. That being thus born again,—born of the Spirit, they may "*grow in grace*" and in the knowledge of the truth, until they become perfect in Christ Jesus, and comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and

depth, and height, and know the love of God which passeth knowledge, and be filled with all the fulness of God. (2 Peter iii. 18; Eph. iii. 18.)

7. They will also learn that this divine arrangement for bringing the sinner into a state of justification and holiness provides for the attestation of the work, when accomplished, not only by its effects on his life, but by the "witness of the Spirit with his spirit that he is a child of God." (Rom. viii. 16.) Continuance in this state is evidenced by the same means, according to St. John, who declares, "Hereby we *know* that he *abideth* in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us." (1 John iii. 24.)

8. Nor can such inquirers after truth fail to learn that this wonderful change of heart and condition is accompanied by relief from conscious condemnation, and its consequent misery, and the experience of joy and peace in the Holy Ghost. For, says St. Paul, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ... and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God." (Rom. v. 1, 2.) He also says, "The kingdom of God is not meat

and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." (Rom. xiv. 17.) And this is confirmed by Peter, who declares, "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now you see him not, yet believing, ye *rejoice* with *joy unspeakable and full of glory*." (1 Peter i. 8.)

We call special attention to this feature of Christianity, because there is no other religion in the world like it in this respect. The religions of *men*, whether pagan or nominally Christian, are generally sombre and oppressive. Their meritoriousness is often measured by the self-torture and misery of their subjects, as if they were required to atone for their sins by their sufferings. The first thing proposed to an anxious soul by some of them is *penance*, or atonement. Our religion furnishes one atonement only, that made by Christ, which is sufficient for every case. It imposes self-denial, but that relates only to *sin*, and enjoins loyalty. But this is not of the nature of punishment, nor does it contemplate the production of merit. It is only what is necessary in changing position, and becoming submissive to God, that the seeker may receive the benefits of the atone-

ment made by him who died that he might live. So soon as seekers reach the saving point in coming to God, he lifts the light of his countenance upon them, and assures them of their acceptance with him, and their heirship to heaven.

This theory, however, does not require the same degree of *feeling* in all persons in the beginning of the work,—the same length of time in the obtainment of its first manifest success, or its advancement to complete maturity of Christian character. These, and some other matters, depend largely on differences in the mental and moral constitutions of subjects, —their previous religious and social training, and the instructions under which they are placed. But one thing is clearly taught, namely, that commencing the work under whatever circumstances, and following such light as they may be able to obtain, they will succeed in achieving a spiritual character and condition that will be highly satisfactory, and demonstrate to them that the Bible, which has been their guide in the pursuit, must have come from God.

9. Another point in this theory is, that relig-

ion, thus experienced, tends to obedience to God, not only where *he* is particularly concerned, but in reference to all his creatures. One of its first inspirations is to know the will of God in reference to man as well, and do it. One is thus made honest, pitiful, sympathetic and tender toward others, and instinctively begins to feel solicitous to bring his friends, and enemies even, to enjoy the new life which throbs in his own heart. These impulses, and the measures to which they lead, are the legitimate fruits of the Spirit, and show a character in wide contrast with that of the natural man.

We would emphasize these points, because so many make religion to consist in *doctrinal* belief, or the observance of some *ceremony* or *service* performed by others, such as absolution, confirmation, or baptism, rather than in personal character. Many profane people claim to be religious, and in safe condition, because they have been lately *absolved* by a *priest.* Others, because they belong to a certain church, and have been baptized. Not a few, who can hardly be called spiritual minded, account themselves Christians because they believe that Christ "*finished*" the work of their eternal

salvation on the cross, and that his atonement guarantees their safety, however disobediently they may live. But Christianity does not recognize any or all of these circumstances as ground of confidence in the absence of the new birth and of intentional loyalty to God, and good will to men.

We say *intentional*, because the Bible does not anticipate absolute perfection in its most devout subjects. It recognizes the possibility of ignorance and error, and even *sin*, but it provides for cancelling them with a Saviour's love at the call of faith and prayer. But it does demand a perfect intention to obey, and prompt repentance in case of failure.

10. We will only add to this inventory of excellencies, that true religion begets such strong confidence in God and his promises, as to sustain its subjects amid the ills of life, and in the immediate prospect of death. The divine record reads thus :

"Blessed (or happy) is that man that maketh the Lord his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies." (Psa. xl. 4.)

"He shall not be afraid of evil tidings ; his

heart is fixed trusting in the Lord." (Psa. cxii. 7.)

"Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh. For the Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken." (Prov. iii. 25, 26.)

"God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." (2 Tim. i. 7.)

"If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God." (1 John iii. 21.)

"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be unto God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. xv. 55, 57.)

"As the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also likewise took part of the same, that through death he might deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." (Heb. ii. 14, 15.)

Thus the Bible promises to its followers triumph in trouble and in death, which no other religion affords. It authorizes the expectation of joy in the presence of the king of terrors, a benefit which false religions seldom promise, and never give. Their highest attainment is

a cold, stoical, reluctant submission, which savors more of fear than confidence, more of despair than hope. Many of their subjects renounce their professed faith at the approach of death, and fall back on the Bible, an event, the like of which we never knew to occur in the case of a sincere Christian.

To these general benefits provided for in the gospel, we might add many more, but it is unnecessary. These are sufficient to experiment on, and these proved true, the others will be realized.

CHAPTER III.

CAUTIONARY SUGGESTIONS WITH REGARD TO THE METHOD OF TESTING THESE TRUTHS.

IT is a noticeable feature of false religions that they propose no demonstration of their truth this side of eternity, and must be accepted, if at all, on the simple assertion of their advocates. If, then, they are found to be groundless, it will be too late to remedy our mistake in trusting them.

Not so with the Christian religion. God has always seemed to recognize the right of his subjects to reasonable evidence of his being and authority, in order to a virtuous observance of his commands. Examples of this fact mark his dealings with men from the beginning. When Moses was called to undertake the deliverance of his brethren from Egyptian bondage, he naturally demurred, saying, "Who am I that I should go unto Pharaoh and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" Looking at the proposition in the

light of the facts, many of which he well understood, the enterprise seemed to him preposterous. But God was not offended. Precaution was reasonable in view of the danger of the work, and was met by further instructions and assurances of all necessary aid. This would have been sufficient, had Moses fully comprehended its source and mighty import. But he did not, and objected that his assumed call of God to the work would be questioned by his own people, when God kindly gave him an immediate foretaste of his coming power, in the matter of the rod which he held in his hand, and a little experiment with the leprosy. He went further, even, and met every objection until Moses felt himself fully endowed for the work. God does not require men to believe or act without evidence. (Exod. iv. 1–7.)

We have another similar example in the case of Gideon. He naturally enough hesitated to put himself into a position for which he had no personal adaptation, without the fullest assurance that God had called him to it and would sustain him, which he received on proper investigation. (See Judges vi.)

Nehemiah had a different experience. He

was a good man, and was deeply interested in the city of his fathers' sepulchres, which was in ruins. Though in bondage at Shushan, he had a right to feel concerned for the honor of his country. Meeting certain Jews one day, fresh from Jerusalem, he was moved to inquire about its condition, and was so affected by the account which he received that he "sat down and wept and mourned certain days, and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven." His sorrow changed his appearance to such a degree as to attract the attention of King Artaxerxes, whose cup-bearer he was, and to whom, on inquiry, he divulged all the facts, without any earthly prospect of obtaining the needful help. But, strange to say, the king invited him to petition for whatever he desired, which was certainly an intimation that God was about to answer his prayers through this unexpected medium. So he ventured along on the line of his desires, which he knew to be right, God's providence coming to his aid in every emergency, until he had repaired the walls of Jerusalem and re-established the pure worship of God in the holy city. (Neh. i.)

Thus God sometimes calls to certain duties

by his Spirit, impressing the heart, and suggesting a particular course of action, which may be safely adopted in the absence of direct revelation. But in such cases, he soon gives evidence of his presence and co-operation, leaving little doubt that the impression is from him, and not a suggestion of the devil, human pride, or worldly ambition. In this way sincere inquirers may expect to be guided, so long as they do nothing against the word of God, or the best interests of their fellow-men.

According to our theory, sinners coming to Christ, have a right to expect that they will experience a radical change of character,—that their old sinful loves, hates and tormenting fears will be taken away, and that they will receive a new heart, inclining them to a life of morality and holiness, and making them happy in religious associations and duties which they now know to be distasteful to them. The religion of Christ is really a *great* thing, or it is nothing. We have no disposition to lower the standard of its character, lest the experimental proofs which we propose to offer, shall be found wanting. Many aver that their experience of its benefits exceeds all descriptions

they ever heard or read, and, of course, surpasses their highest expectations. But still we deem it important to suggest that there is danger of claiming more for it than is properly authorized. For instance,

1. It does not propose to make all its recipients rich in this world's goods, or learned in its lore.

2. Nor to make them prophets, or discerners of spirits, or healers of diseases, or workers of miracles. These gifts are extraneous, and are only bestowed in connection with specific cases, special calls, and for particular purposes. A converted sinner is a man still, limited in knowledge, and liable to err in judgment and action, but he is free from the domination of old appetites and passions, and is happy in doing the will of God and feeling assured that his ways please him. He is, therefore, capable of setting a good Christian example before his fellowmen, and with such right words as he may be able to speak, he may constantly exert a pious influence and contribute to the furtherance of the grace of God in others.

3. Some make the mistake of believing that complete fellowship with God necessarily en-

dows one with the Holy Ghost and with *power*, so that he will be mighty in pulling down the strongholds of opposition, and bringing many sinners to repentance. Under this delusion, not a few have committed grievous excesses in the use of means, and have so mortifyingly failed, that they have become discouraged and denied the faith. Religion, which implies a right character, and saves from the bondage of sin, condemnation and wrath, is one thing, the gift of *power*, is another. The former does not necessarily involve the latter, though it always exerts a healthful influence in that direction. Some very holy people are exceedingly weak, while others, of less apparent spirituality excel in power. I mention this that the reader may not anticipate from religion what is not authorized by the word of God, and be disappointed in the result, should he attempt to test it. Other misapprehensions sometimes entertained by sinners might also be named for the same reason, but they will appear in what is to follow.

4. Another important point to be considered in this experiment, is involved in the *means* to be employed in seeking religion. While certain

details in the absence of specific instructions or convictions are of no account, others are indispensable, though to the natural heart they may seem frivolous. Right here lies the rock of offence on which many seekers have stumbled. Some have refused to do essential things, and, of course, could but fail, while others have made an issue on non-essentials, following their prejudices in trifles, which, for all they know, might be important, and have abandoned the enterprise in despair. That is *no* trial worthy of the name, and all such experimenters are ruled out as witnesses, really knowing no more on the subject than if they had never given it a moment's thought. Others may have done the best they knew for a time, but not finding the anticipated result, returned to the world. Their testimony cannot be admitted against the claims of religion, because of the imperfection of their seeking. Those who held on a little longer, made a complete success. Sinners who enlist for a *night*, a week, or a month, are very likely, almost certain, to fail, unless they change their minds, while those who enter for life, as all should do, may find in an hour or even in one minute.

5. A fair test of the Christian theory involves several fundamental conditions, to wit :

1. Conviction of sin, which may be more or less comprehensive, clear, and impressive. A deep and painful conviction is generally coveted by people who propose to attend to the interests of their souls, probably because they think it will be more pleasing to God, and be more likely to secure pardon. This grows out of the prevailing idea that it is necessary to *do* or *suffer* something to appease his anger and merit his favor. But this is a mistake, no human merit being required, and the blessings sought being offered as a *free gift* on certain unmeritorious conditions. The only object of conviction is to stimulate to the performance of these conditions. Hence that degree of it which effects this is sufficient. It may be deep and painful, or only intellectual. The latter is as good as the former, provided it leads to faith and obedience.

2. It involves also complete submission to the will of God,—that we abandon what he is understood to forbid, whether in so many words, or by fair construction, and do what he requires. Any limitation here will defeat the enterprise,

and often does so,—the seeker renouncing some of his sins, but not all of them, and consenting to do certain duties, but refusing to do others. The submission must be so complete that where there is doubt whether a certain course is forbidden or is required, and the opposite is *harmless* in itself, we shall give God the benefit of the doubt, and do, or refrain from doing, the thing in question. Not to do this, shows a *want* of earnestness and solicitude sufficient to prevent success in any pursuit. A seeker who will insist on following his own judgment or taste, in matters which he has not fully investigated, against the uniform experience of friendly advisers, shows that he is more concerned about his convenience, opinions, and reputation with the enemies of religion, than he is to save his soul. The importance of strict conformity to instructions is illustrated by a little experiment in electricity which we lately witnessed. The professor desired the congregation to join their naked hands, and having completed the arrangement, gave us a slight shock, which caused a pretty general impression and scream, demonstrating the point in hand. But some of the crowd were utterly unmoved, and

wondered at the tumult of their neighbors. The experiment, as far as they were concerned, was a complete failure, and they could not believe. But on examination it was found that they were at fault,—they did not remove their gloves, which, being a non-conductor, prevented their sharing in the common feeling of the assembly. So it often happens with people who propose to test religion,—they neglect to comply with some requisition which they deem unimportant and fail to realize the demonstration promised.

3. Full and formal *consecration* to God in some manner is equally necessary. Sinners never do better than they resolve in advance to do. In this case, where the natural heart is opposed to religious duties, a solemn commitment to them is indispensable to their performance. Had not the prodigal son said, "I will arise and go to my father," he would never have taken the first step in that direction. And the more publicity one gives to such a consecration, the more likely will he be to carry it into effect. Secret vows are generally broken. Therefore it has justly been said, "The road to hell is paved with good resolutions."

4. The same may be affirmed of *confession.* "If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John i. 9.) God requires confession to himself, and to others, whom we may have offended, and that it be made as public as the sins committed. This is a disagreeable part of the sinner's duty, and is often evaded, or so imperfectly performed as to render his efforts unavailing.

5. Personal prayer, too, is indispensable. Some seekers have omitted it, and depended alone on the prayers of others, but they failed to realize the promised benefit until they surrendered this point also, and cried, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

But prayer to be successful, must be obedient. "If I regard (cherish) iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." (Psa. lxvi. 18.) Isaiah inculcated the same sentiment when he said to God's ancient people, "Behold the Lord's hand is not shortened that he cannot save; neither his ear heavy that he cannot hear." The reason why he did not hear in that case is thus suggested: "Your hands are full of blood. Wash ye, make you clean; put

away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." (Isa. i. 15–17.)

People who continue in sin, of omission or commission, have no right to expect that God will hear them; they *cannot* believe in any proper sense,—it is impossible. But when they give up their rebellion and address themselves to obedience, to believe becomes legitimate and easy.

Here is the difficulty with many who seek pardon or other grace,—they fail to "bring all the tithes into the storehouse," and try to obtain the blessing on other terms than those which are prescribed. They say "Lord, Lord," but fail to do his will according to their own apprehension of it. They frequently refuse to give up some practice, opinion, association, or prejudice, which they suspect to be wrong, or to perform some duty which is urged upon them by the Spirit. These things will defeat their object as surely as flagrant immorality. There can be no success in prayer without complete surrender to God. As to the length or number of prayers necessary to be offered, in order to

secure a promised blessing, the Bible gives us little instruction. The specimens it furnishes are all short. "God be merciful to me a sinner" brought prompt justification to the convicted publican. (Luke xviii. 13.) "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David," and "Lord help me," secured the answer, "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." (Mat. xv. 28.) So far as we are informed, Saul of Tarsus, and the Philippian jailer employed but few words, but they were mightily to the point. Even Elijah's great prayer, which brought fire from heaven, and gave him complete victory over the prophets of Baal, was very brief. If our object is provided for by the promises of God, and we pray in the honest exercise of all the knowledge and faith we can command, we are sure to succeed sooner or later, and should never be discouraged, however the blessing may be delayed.

6. Many who feel the need of religion, dread the reproach involved in it, and therefore seek it in a private way. They refuse to confess their need of Christ before men. They desire to be private partners, and make vigorous efforts to that end, but always fail to obtain

satisfactory results. The fault is not God's, but their own—not the product of constitutional skepticism, but of pride and insubordination. No one can savingly believe until he submits, and few if any fail to believe when they do so.

7. A very common obstacle to success is found, too, in the unpleasant duty of *forgiving* our fellow-men. Jesus says, "When ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses." (Mark. xi. 25.) This principle is embraced also in the form of prayer which he gave to his disciples, in these words, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors," assigning as the reason for it, that "if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matt. vi. 14.)

8. Confession to men is not less important. It is not pleasant, but it is often indispensable. We have lately witnessed a striking case of it in a business man, who was earnestly seeking the "higher life," but without the least success. He had had difficulty with two men, and the courts had decided in his favor. But he knew

that he had wronged both of them, nevertheless. When he attempted to pray, these cases stared him right in the face. So, asking God for assistance, he put himself in the way of one of them on the street, and accosting him, said, "Mr. P., I have wronged you, and I want to set it right." The matter was settled in a few minutes, in tears on both sides. He then struck for the other man, and did the same, with like success. He was a happy man, and went to his prayers, filled with delight. That trouble was the only obstacle in his way, and he removed it himself, according to the Saviour's command, "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." (Matt. v. 23–24.)

9. This brings to view a difficulty which many sincere seekers of spiritual blessings have encountered. Having, as they believed, laid all on the altar, and endeavored to comply with the conditions to the utmost of their ability, they have failed for considerable time to find the desired boon, without being able to perceive

any satisfactory reason for it. Then, perhaps, in a moment, when they were not expecting it, it has come upon them in glorious power. This state of things appears in the experiences presented in the following pages. One man of whom we heard not long since, sought the Lord fifteen years, and thought it of no use to press the matter further, and gave it all up to God, and in a moment received the witness of the Spirit that he was born again. That was his first act of *trust*.

But what to us seems inscrutable, is, no doubt, wisely ordered. God sees merciful reasons for the delay. If he were to convert or sanctify us according to our wishes, we might not improve and retain the grace as well as we now do. It is important for us to feel our dependence,—to be assured that the work we seek is of God and not of ourselves,—that while it is ours to ask, he only can give. Many have wondered at the Saviour's treatment of the woman of Canaan, but when we consider how many important interests were promoted by it, its wisdom is manifest.—The first penitent prayer offered by Saul of Tarsus carried with it, no doubt, the full surrender of his will

to Christ, based on firm faith in his divinity and power, and it brought a speedy answer of instruction, but not of conscious salvation. He was three days and nights after that in darkness. The Lord saw it necessary for him to become better acquainted with those whom he was seeking to destroy, and to this end arranged for them to be the means of his deliverance. He accordingly left him to endure his scales and solicitudes for a season, to give time for Ananias of Damascus to be properly instructed, and lay his hands upon him. (Acts ix. 6–18.)

To human apprehension it would seem that the disciples of Jesus never needed the comforts of the Holy Ghost more than at the hour that they went into the upper room at Jerusalem, immediately after the ascension of their Master; yet according to all accounts they continued in prayer ten days before the baptism came. Why? Who can tell? It is not unreasonable to believe that those ten days were of great value to them. Taken in connection with what followed, they taught them a lesson of cheerful trustfulness, and prepared them for coming trials. It is not difficult to

imagine other good reasons for this delay of the Pentecost, but as God has not seen fit to disclose the secrets of his providence in the case, we cannot speak with confidence.

This is just where the true worshippers of God stand to-day. Putting themselves in the attitude of humble and loyal suppliants for some benefit provided for and promised in the gospel, they have reason to expect immediate attention to their petitions, but as a matter of fact they often, like David, find it necessary to "wait *patiently* for the Lord." They call, but he does not seem to answer. They knock, but the door does not appear to open, and they know not why. So they turn to the Bible for light, and often find encouragement. Then they examine themselves, and pray elsewhere, and in another way, and succeed.

Earnest seekers of a specific blessing are apt to omit *thanksgiving* for other benefits which they already enjoy. By improving their prayers in this respect, they often find what they seek. We therefore advise them, however miserable, to thank God for their convictions, and all other mercies, of whatever kind.—In their solicitude for themselves, too, they fre-

quently forget the welfare of others. But they should remember that God turned "the captivity of Job" (which he had long and painfully endured) "when he prayed for his friends, and gave him twice as much as he had before." (Job xlii. 10.)

Nothing is more common than for those who have exhausted all the means of which they have any knowledge, to fear that there is no chance for them,—they will never obtain the blessing they seek; but this is a sad mistake. "Him that cometh unto me," saith the Saviour, "I will in *no wise* cast out." The fact that they *desire* the blessing, shows that God is seeking to save them. Those who are abandoned of God are not exercised in this way.

We ought to learn something on this subject from ourselves as parents and guardians. Our children often solicit things which we are disposed to give them, but for good reasons deem it best to delay the bestowment to some future time. He who has been seeking to bring us into fellowship with himself, ever since we passed the line of accountability, will not reject us now that we attempt to submit to his will.

"One there is above all others,
Well deserves the name of Friend;
His is love beyond a brother's,
Costly, free, and knows no end."

10. Finally, all these things, as before intimated, are to be done in more or less faith in God and his word. It may be only as a grain of mustard seed at the beginning, but it always grows under right practice, according to the words of Jesus, "If any man will *do* his will, he shall" (not only believe, but) "*know* of the doctrine whether it be of God." (John vii. 16.) Sooner or later he will reach the final act of faith, or humble trust in God, giving strong assurance of the pardon of his sins, and his adoption into the divine family, acccompanied with power over sin, and a holy joyfulness never realized before.

It must be borne in mind that nothing is promised to sinners who take only a partial course, renouncing some sins and retaining others, doing some duties, but neglecting some, denying self in certain particulars, but indulging it in others. God requires the whole heart, and complete subordination to his will. He commands that we bring all the tithes into the storehouse and prove him therewith, before he

will open the windows of heaven and pour us out a blessing that "there shall not be room to receive it." (Mal. iii. 10.) The sinner naturally "*feels better*" in making any slight effort to repent, and is liable to accept such relief as evidence that he is converted; but that is not conversion. True conversion will bring its own demonstration in due time, showing it to be of God; and that his word, which suggested it and directed in its attainment, must be true.

Something of this sort occurs, too, in making an effort to reach higher attainments in grace. But it is never best to profess to have succeeded on first impressions of relief, or of comfort. God proposes to "*fill*" his faithful children with the Spirit, and thus demonstrate his approving presence, and their complete acceptance. To "see men as trees walking" was a great attainment to the blind man, but by waiting a little longer, he received another touch, and was fully restored, so that he "saw every man clearly." (Mark viii. 22–25.)

Too much hurry in testing the promises of God in these particulars is also a prolific source of failure in seekers, and dishonor to God. No one need be afraid of being lost while

he lies at the feet of Jesus, seeking to obtain a new heart. That is eminently a place of safety. Nor need he doubt the success of his efforts, if he will submit to the terms laid down in the word of God, and illustrated in the experiences of Christians. It may seem dark as midnight, —it generally does seem so to certain minds,— yet, thank God, the light will come. Nothing could be darker than the morning of the day that Mary went to the sepulchre. The church of God never seemed so utterly hopeless as then, and no one could see from whence relief could come. But how soon the cloud burst, and the glory of the Lord appeared! Thus it often occurs with seeking sinners, who see how God can save everybody but themselves—God speaks and they are happy.

I have written thus particularly on these points to counteract the prevailing tendency to unbelief, and prepare the reader to appreciate the many experiences which are to follow. It might be proper to dwell at greater length on *faith*, but this is necessarily implied to a certain extent in all the processes of Christian action. No one will take the first step toward religion, until he has some faith in the truth of its

assumptions, and that faith will increase as he proceeds in duty till it grasps all that is promised.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FOREGOING CLAIMS SUSTAINED BY THE EXPERIENCE OF BIBLE CHARACTERS.

THE Bible not assuming to be a book of personal experience, we can hardly expect to find much material in it to our purpose. Yet there are a few cases sufficiently explicit and comprehensive to demonstrate several of the points indicated. To these we ask attention, beginning with

DAVID THE KING OF ISRAEL.

He was born 1085 years before Christ, and seems to have remembered the God of his fathers from his youth. By the divine preference he was anointed king, while keeping his father's sheep, when the Spirit of the Lord came upon him. (1 Sam. xvi. 13.) His piety is seen in the fact that he attributed to God

his success in killing a lion and a bear, and taking a lamb "out of his mouth," and in believing that the same power would avail him in avenging the insult which the great Goliath offered to his Maker and his country. (1 Sam. xvii. 34.) His subsequent career was marked by unvarying loyalty, with a single exception, and gave him the reputation of being "the man after God's own heart." His psalms place him among the most eminent of prophets. They excel no less in sublimity and tenderness of expression, than in loftiness and purity of religious sentiment. They have embodied so exquisitely the universal language of religious emotion, that they have entered with unquestioned propriety into the ritual of the higher and more perfect religion of Christ.—*Watson.*

But in the matter of Uriah, he sinned, and fell into condemnation, and needed to repent like any other man. How he obtained remission, and restoration to the favor of God, may be seen in the following remarks:

1. He did not deny the facts, or attempt to justify them, but received reproof humbly and penitently.

2. He confessed his sins, saying "Mine ini-

quities are gone over my head, as a heavy burden they are too heavy for me."—"I am bowed down greatly, I go mourning all the day long."—"I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin."

3. He pledged himself to greater carefulness in the future, saying, "I will take heed unto my ways, that I sin not with my tongue."

4. He prayed for mercy and restoration,—"O Lord, rebuke me not in thy wrath, neither chastise me in thy hot displeasure."—"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin." (Psa. li. 1, 2.) "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee." (vers. 12.)

5. The result of his efforts was satisfactory. He sums it up in these few words,—"I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established

my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord. Blessed (happy) is that man that maketh the Lord his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies." (Psa. xl. 1–4.)

KING MANASSAH

was a different character. He was the son of the good Hezekiah, and ascended the throne of Judah when he was twelve years old. He commenced at once to undo the work of his honored father, and succeeded in establishing idolatry in every direction. "He made the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err, and to do worse than the heathen." Wherefore the Lord delivered him up to the king of Assyria, who "bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon." This was a terrible trial, and seemed likely to prove fatal, but like sinners in these days, who have forfeited all right to ask anything of their insulted Maker, "when he was in affliction he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed unto him, and he was entreated of him, and heard his supplication

and brought him again into his kingdom. Then Manassah *knew* that the Lord he was God." (2 Chron. xxxiii. 12, 13.)

He had been a great sinner, but God in great mercy accepted his repentance and prayers, and so changed his character that after he was reinstated he broke down the altars of the false gods, abolished idolatrous worship, and reestablished the worship of the God of Israel. The only objection to him after that time is, that he did not destroy the high places.

THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN.

We have in these characters fair representatives of two classes of sinners to be found at the present time in most civilized communities. (Luke xviii. 10–14.) The Pharisee belonged to a religious and popular sect of the Jews, which claimed pre-eminence in knowledge and holiness, and despised others. They believed themselves to be the favorites of Heaven, on account of their descent from Abraham, their observance of circumcision and the sacrifices which they offered. While they accepted the Hebrew Scriptures, they held more tenaciously to the traditions of the fathers, and imposed

on their disciples many duties unknown to the law. They were too conceited to mingle with others, and so hypocritical and heartless as fully to justify the terrible descriptions given of them by the Saviour.

The publican belonged to a class of men who were generally detested for their intolerable rapacity and avarice. They were abhorred in a special manner by the Jews, to whom the Roman government was odious. Assisting in the collection of Roman tribute, they were regarded as betrayers of the liberties of their country, and abettors of those who enslaved it. —*Clarke.*

That the Pharisee should have gone to the temple to pray is not remarkable; he was in the habit of doing so, and of making long prayers, and other exhibitions of himself and of his religious pretensions. He selected the most holy place practicable, and expressed himself just as he felt, when he said, "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican." He asked for nothing, because he felt the need of nothing; he was fully satisfied with himself,

in view of his own merits, and in contrast with his fellow-worshipper.

How the publican happened to go to the temple just at that time, is not so easily explained. He was evidently unaccustomed to it, but went from a deep sense of his guilt and danger, brought upon him by some means of which we have no account. His convictions were such that he could not make himself prominent or appear boldly confident, for, "Standing afar off, he would not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner." This was all he said, and all that was necessary. In his anxiety for pardon, he let the insult of the Pharisee pass without reply, and just threw himself in these few words on the mere mercy of God. While the Pharisee confessed other men's sins, *he* confessed his own, and while the Pharisee congratulated himself on his comparative holiness, the publican prayed for mercy. "I tell you," says Jesus, "this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Though this is only the barest outline of experience, it suggests important lessons to conceited religionists of whatever sect, who claim alone to be Christians, and denounce and reprobate all others who do not submit to their authority; and it is not less encouraging to the extremely wicked who desire to reform, and will come to God penitently and prayerfully for themselves, though opposed by formalists of the highest pretensions.

SAUL OF TARSUS.

The first mention of this man in the Scriptures, is found in connection with the martyrdom of the devout Stephen, A. D. 34, to which he consented. (Acts viii. 1.) He was a Pharisee, but unlike many others, he was entirely sincere, and verily thought that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus. (Acts xxvi. 9.) He was a man of great natural abilities and strength of character, and profoundly learned, having been brought up "at the feet of Gamaliel and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers." (Acts xxii. 3.) Of course he hated the name of Christ, and looked upon his followers as the

enemies of God and the people. Hence, when a great persecution arose in Jerusalem, after the death of Stephen, he took an active part in it, which he describes as follows :—

"Many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests: and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities." (Acts xxvi. 10, 11.)

Among the places which attracted his attention was Damascus, where there were a few disciples, who had escaped the persecutions at Jerusalem. Determined to drive the new sect out of the country, he obtained letters of authority to arrest and bring them bound to the holy city, "for to be punished," and started, nothing doubting, that he should accomplish the work without serious difficulty, as he would have done, most likely, had it not been for a singular providence which disturbed his arrangements. Of this he gives the following account:

"As I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there

shone from heaven a great light round about me. And I fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake unto me. And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus, and it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do. And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came unto Damascus. And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there, came unto me, and stood and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him. And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. And now why tarriest thou?

arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord. And it came to pass that when I was come to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance, and saw him saying unto me, Make haste and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee: And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him. And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles. (Acts xxii. 6–21.)

Thus we see the extreme hostility of Saul to Christ and his cause, his awakening, surrender and confession, in calling Jesus of Nazareth "*Lord*,"—his prayer and obedience,—going to Damascus as instructed to do (the greatest cross probably that could have been imposed upon him),—submitting to baptism, and thus making a public confession of Christianity,—and then returning to his old prejudiced friends and fellow Pharisees at Jerusalem, and telling them his remarkable experience, and boldly

preaching the faith which he had so recently sought to destroy.

From this singular transition in his views and feelings, he went forth into many places preaching Jesus, and glorying in the cross, for which he suffered the loss of all things, ending his life in victory, by martyrdom, more than thirty years after, saying, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." (2 Tim. iv. 6–8.)

Saul was not a man to be easily duped. He knew how to weigh evidence, and his experience was more demonstrative to him of the divine reality and power of Christianity than any outward *miracle* which he could only have seen or heard. He was as concious of faith and love as he was before of unbelief and hatred, and he gave to the world such evidence of the change that had been wrought in him, as ought not to have been questioned. In the light of

this and subsequent experiences, he vindicted the theory of religion which we believe, and are seeking to illustrate and defend. Yet, to evade the force of his logic and testimony, he was wickedly accused, as his Master was before him, and as living Christians always have been since. Festus charged that much learning had made him *mad*, and that he was *beside* himself. (Acts xxvi. 24.) But prejudice is blind and unreasonable.

THE PHILIPPIAN JAILER.

The story of this man, recorded by St. Luke, is intimately connected with the imprisonment of Paul and Silas at Philippi. Paul had cast an evil spirit out of a damsel, who brought her master "much gain by soothsaying," whereupon they were arrested and taken before the magistrates, who, to show their horror of his teachings and interference with the business of gentlemen,

"Rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat *them*. And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast *them* into prison, charging the jailer to keep them safely: who, having received such a charge, thrust them in-

to the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed *their* stripes: and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house." (Acts xvi. 22–34.)

There is little room to doubt that the jailer was in full sympathy with the public prejudice and injustice to which it led. It was his official duty to keep Paul and Silas safely, but this hardly required him to put them in the inner prison (dungeon), and make their feet fast in the stocks. This was more an expression of his personal hostility to them than a necessary precaution, but as the matter turned, it was a good thing, since it required more of an earthquake to liberate them than would have been necessary had they been furnished with better accommodations.

Being awaked out of sleep, and seeing his prisoners loose, the jailer's first thought was to take his own life, to save himself from a more disgraceful execution by the civil authorities, but Paul's thoughtful demur and assurance that they were "all there," restrained him. His next impression seems to have been of a religious character. He could not account for this singular state of things, without admitting that these men were God's servants, the expounders of his truth, and that the earthquake had been sent to liberate and vindicate them. In this view of the subject, the salvation of his soul on

the basis of their teachings seemed to him of paramount importance. Instead, therefore, of taking measures to secure his prisoners, he "called for a light and *sprang* in, and came *trembling* and *fell down* before Paul and Silas, and brought them out (having, quite recovered from his fear of their escape), and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Being informed, he promptly complied, and was baptized in token of his faith and full commitment to Christ.

A wonderful change must have taken place in him, not only in his unbelief with regard to the main question, but in his feelings toward his prisoners. For, "he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes," to relieve their pain, an act indicating love, no less than putting them in the stocks the previous evening indicated hate. Besides, "he brought them into his house, and set meat before them," and introduced them to his family, showing special kindness, and "*rejoiced*, believing in God with all his house."

The change was radical,—a spiritual birth from death to life. He probably believed in God, in some sort, before, and he could hardly

fail to fear that the new religion was of God when he heard the midnight songs and prayers of his servants, but it required an earthquake to bring him to right action. That, with what followed, settled the question, and enabled him to renounce all for the salvation of his soul.

LYDIA OF THYATIRA.

We introduce this case, because it concerns a different character from any yet named, and presents a different type of experience, and yet one not less satisfactory in the result.

Lydia was not a Jewess by birth, but a proselyte, and a devout worshipper of God according to the light she enjoyed. She was a seller of purple at Philippi, the scene of the last case named. Paul, spending the Sabbath in that city, went out by the riverside, "where prayer was wont to be made," and spake unto the women who resorted thither. The Bible record of her, runs thus:

"And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard *us;* whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she

was baptized, and her household, she besought *us*, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide *there*. And she constrained us." (Acts xvi. 14–15.)

It will be observed, that she was a good woman in her way, not a bigot, but a sincere inquirer after the truth. Hearing the apostles explain the doctrines and practices of the gospel, the Lord opened her heart to receive them, without the intervention of any remarkable providence, or powerful conviction, and she was immediately baptized and her household, thus fully committing herself and her whole family to the cause of Christ. Then, under the inspiration of her new affections, she invited the apostles to make her house their home when in the place, and not only so, but "*constrained* them," showing that she was in dead earnest to have them accept her hospitality. This required no little courage, as well as kindness, and showed that she enjoyed her new light, and was willing to share the persecutions which its acceptance might incur.

This should convince inquirers that the pungent convictions and alarming providences

which seem necessary to bring some people to Christ, are not indispensable to others. Their only importance is to superinduce reformation, and submission to the will of God. Sinners ought to turn to the Lord without them, as a matter of imperative duty and interest, and they will be accepted and regenerated just as readily, as if they should do so under some terrible fright, or be overwhelmed with distress.

THE PRODIGAL SON

furnishes a striking illustration of this great change, but is too familiar to need particular rehearsal. It is enough to say, that he was pleasantly situated at home with his father, left and wandered into a far country, and "there wasted his substance in riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in the land and he began to be in want." When, instead of retracing his steps, "he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his field to feed swine," the lowest and meanest of business. Here he was so reduced in food that he would have eaten husks with the swine, had it been possible, "and no man gave unto him." This

brought him to reflection, which is generally the first step in a religious life. Casting about to see what he could do to improve his condition, he naturally thought of his father's house, which he had too hastily left, and exclaimed to himself, "How many hired *servants* of my father have bread enough and to spare, and *I* perish with hunger!"

A sad condition, indeed, for one who had been so well off! But what of it?—he had forfeited all right to that home, and had no invitation to return. His life had disgraced his father's family, and he was now in rags and utter destitution, and could not return without unutterable mortification to himself and his relatives. But there being no prospect of relief in any other direction, he assumed the courage to say, then and there, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants." This resolution he promptly carried into effect, in doubt whether he should obtain a servant's place, and was embraced and kissed by his compassionate father before he had time

to make his proposed confession and prayer, showing the willingness of God to receive all penitent wanderers, who will submit to his authority. (Luke xv. 11–24.)

In this case the exciting cause of reform was *hunger* and suffering ; but leading to right action, it was successful, thus exploding the doctrine of "*pure motives*" in penitents, of which we used to hear so much. The sinner's motives can hardly be expected to be holy, until he becomes a new creature by regeneration. But God receives all who come to him, whether frightenened by the Spirit or an earthquake, or tormented with hunger, provided they submit to his will.

ZACCHEUS THE PUBLICAN

presents some pecularities of special interest to those who may consider themselves excluded from any part or lot in the matter, or who feel themselves so extremely wicked, that it will require much time for them to become Christians, should they attempt it. Then, it is a genuine case of conversion, so acknowledged by Jesus himself, as we shall see.

Jericho was a very considerable city, and

carried on extensive business, which yielded a large revenue. Zaccheus was chief of the collectors, and was generally hated by his countrymen, because, being a Jew, he had consented to become an agent of Roman exaction, and had risen to rank and fortune. The kind conduct of Jesus toward publicans had, no doubt, been reported to him, and had created a desire to see one who had the courage to resist public prejudice to this extent. So, hearing that he was passing through Jericho, he determined to see him, but the crowd was so great, and he so "little of stature," that he was obliged, if he would succeed, to run ahead and climb up into a tree, which he did, not expecting to attract the attention of any one. He merely wanted to see Jesus, "who he was," and thus gratify a natural curiosity. But to his surprise, Jesus came right to the spot, "and looked up and saw him and said unto him, Zaccheus, make haste and come down: for to-day I must abide at thy house." Never was summons more sudden or unexpected. But it commanded prompt attention. Zaccheus "made haste and came down and received him joyfully."

Had the matter ended here, it might have

passed off as a singular affair, and nothing more been heard of it. Sinners sometimes get cornered, and say and do things,—good things even, which have no manifest foundation in their real convictions or purposes. But Zaccheus really felt that a great honor had been shown him, and a great change had come over him, in point of character, wherein he had been especially defective ; for, having his distinguished guest fully secured, he "stood, and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the *half* of my goods I give to the poor ; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him four fold." "*The half*."—The law required only a *fifth* of one's goods to be given in charity in such a case. The heart of love goes beyond the law. "*I give*,"—i. e., I hereby give (*Whedon*) ; expressing, not a habit, but a purpose. "*If I have taken* anything from any man" (a confession that he might have done so) "by *false accusation*" (that is, by informing falsely, taxing unjustly, or by any method of extortion) "I restore him *fourfold*."—This was the Roman law of restitution. The Hebrew law required the principal and one-fifth in addition, if restitution was

voluntary, or fourfold when publicly convicted of fraud. (Exod. xxii. 1–12.) Publicans, however, were required by law to restore only the sum extorted.—*Van Oosterzee.*

This was a great thing for a rich, worldly man to do, and can be accounted for on no other principle than that he had been transformed from darkness to light. But to place the matter beyond all doubt, "Jesus said unto him, This day is *salvation* come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke xix. 1–10.)

Conviction is seldom more singularly or suddenly produced, or more promptly and heartily acknowledged and followed by reform and salvation. God's *means* are various, but always succeed when properly improved, though they may seem to be insufficient, or out of the usual order.

But some will say that similar things transpire independently of the gospel. When? Where? What other religion, or what system of philosophy or infidelity thus changes men from sinners to saints,—from bad to good, from anxious doubts to joyful confidence? What is

it? Where is it to be found? Let it be presented.

CHAPTER V.

SIMILAR EXPERIENCES AMONG THE EARLY FATHERS.

THE experience of Christians who immediately succeeded the apostles was, no doubt, similar to those described in the last chapter, but we are not able to furnish many details. Ignatius was elected bishop of Antioch, A. D. 70, and forty years afterward was cast into prison and sentenced to be devoured by wild beasts, unless he would renounce the Christian faith. But this he would not do, and received his sentence with joy. "I thank thee, O Lord," he exclaimed, "that thou hast condescended to honor me with thy love, and hast thought me worthy, with thy apostle Paul, to be bound in iron chains." In a letter to Rome, under these trying circumstances, he wrote:

"Now I begin to be a disciple; nor shall

anything move me, whether visible or invisible, that I may attain to Christ Jesus. Let fire and the cross; let the companies of wild beasts; let breaking of bones and tearing of members; let the shattering in pieces of the whole body, and all the wicked torments of the devil come upon me; only let me enjoy Jesus Christ. All the ends of the world and the kingdoms of it, will profit me nothing; I would rather die for Jesus Christ than rule the utmost ends of the earth. Him I seek who died for us; him I desire that rose again for us. This is the gain that is laid up for me."

Polycarp, and others, met a similar fate in the same heroic manner. They renounced all for Christ, and accepted torture and death rather than to deny his name.

Coming down a little further, we encounter another distinguished hero whose experience is more fully stated, and indicates the *oneness* of spiritual religion.

Aurelius Augustine, bishop of Hippo, was born A. D. 354. In his youth he inclined to frivolity and not to study, and was flogged for his idleness. He was religiously educated by his mother, who was a devout woman, and

intensely interested in the welfare of her son. At sixteen he was loose in his habits, and committed many sins. This probably led him to question the opinions of the church, and adopt the Manichæan system, otherwise the skeptical inventions of one *Mani Manes,* which subjected revelation to human reason. For nine years he was occupied with writing books, teaching rhetoric, etc., without God and without hope in the world. Then he renounced these errors and addressed himself to worldly amusement. But being attacked by fever, he became alarmed about his soul, and contemplated a new life. But he was so enslaved to his fleshly appetites and passions that his best purposes were often thwarted. The struggle was intense, involving many prayers, conversations with pious friends, and discouragements. But he found deliverance at last by the grace of God. We give a part of his experience in his own words, summarized from his "*Confessions,*" written many years after :

"Thus came I (he says) to see from my own experience, what I had read, how that 'the flesh lusted against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh.' I verily lusted both ways.

. . . Nor had I aught to answer, Thee, calling to me, 'Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.' Convicted by the truth, I had nothing at all to reply, but the drawling and drowsy words, 'Presently, lo, presently,—leave me a little while.' But presently, presently had no present, and my 'leave me for a little while' went on for a long while. In vain did 'I delight in Thy law after the inner man, when another law in my members warred against the law of my mind, and brought me into captivity to the law of sin, which was in my members.' 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the law of sin and death?'

"Thus was I sick and tormented, accusing myself far more severely than was my wont, tossing and turning me in my chain till that was utterly broken. Then, O Lord, Thou pressedst me in my inward parts by a severe mercy, lest I should again give way. For I said mentally, 'Lo let it be now,—let it be done now.' And, as I spake, I all but came to a resolve. I all but did it, yet I did it not. And I tried again and wanted but little of reaching it, and yet came not at it, nor touched, nor

grasped it, hesitating to die unto death and to live unto life. And the very moment in which I was to become another man, the nearer it approached me, the greater was my horror.

"The very toys of toys, and vanities of vanities still enthralled me; they shook my fleshly garment, and whispered softly, 'Dost thou part with us? And from that moment, shall we no more be with thee forever?"

"But when a profound reflection had, from the secret depths of my soul, drawn together and heaped up all my misery before the sight of my heart, there arose a mighty storm, accompanied by as mighty a shower of tears. Which, that I might pour forth fully, with its natural expressions, I stole away from Alypius (his friend); for it suggested itself to me that solitude was fitter for the business of weeping. So I retired to such a distance that even his presence could not be oppressive to me. Thus was it with me at that time, and he perceived it; for something, I believe, I had spoken, wherein the sound of my voice appeared choked with weeping, and in that state I had risen up. He then remained where he had been sitting, most completely astonished. I flung myself

down, how, I know not, under a certain fig-tree, giving free course to my tears. And, not indeed in these words, and yet to this effect, spake I much unto Thee: 'But Thou, O Lord, how long? How long, Lord, how long? Wilt Thou be angry forever? O remember not against us former iniquities;' for I felt that I was enthralled by them. I sent up these sorrowful cries,—'How long,—how long? To-morrow, and to-morrow? Why not now? Why is there not this hour an end to my uncleanness?'

"I was saying these things and weeping in the most bitter contrition of my heart, when, lo, I heard the voice of a girl or a boy, I know not which, coming from a neighboring house, chanting, and oft repeating, 'Take up and read; take up and read.'—Immediately my countenance was changed, and I began most earnestly to consider whether it was usual for children in any kind of game to sing such words; nor could I remember ever to have heard the like. So, restraining the torrent of my tears, I rose up, interpreting it no other way than as a command to me from Heaven to open the book and read the first chapter I

should light upon. For I had heard of Anthony, that accidentally coming in whilst the gospel was being read, he received the admonition as if what was read was addressed to him,—'Go sell all that thou hast, and come and follow me.' And by such oracle was forthwith converted unto Thee. So, quietly I returned to the place where Alypius was sitting; for there had I put down the volume of the apostles, when I rose thence. I grasped, opened, and in silence read that paragraph on which my eyes first fell,—'Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.' No further would I read, nor did I need, for instantly, as the sentence ended, by a light, as it were, of security infused into my heart,—the gleam of doubt vanished away.

"Closing the book, I now with a tranquil countenance, made it known to Alypius. And he then declared what was wrought in him which I knew not. Then we go to my mother. We make it known to her,—she rejoiceth. We relate how it came to pass,—she leapeth for joy,

and triumpheth, and blesseth Thee, who art 'able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think'; for she perceived Thee to have given her more for me than she used to ask by her pitiful and most doleful groanings. For Thou didst so convert me unto Thyself, that I sought none of this world's hopes."

Having been thus divinely transformed, he exclaimed:

"O Lord, truly I am Thy servant, and the son of thy handmaid: Thou hast loosed my bonds. I will offer to Thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving. Let my heart and my tongue praise Thee. How evil have not my deeds been; or if not my deeds, my words; or if not my words, my will? But Thou, O Lord, art good and merciful, and Thy right hand had respect unto the profoundness of my death, and removed from the bottom of my heart that abyss of corruption. But when, during all these years, out of what deep and secret retreat was my free will summoned forth in a moment, whereby I gave my neck to thy 'easy yoke,' and my shoulders to Thy 'light burden'; O Christ Jesus, my strength and my Redeemer! What, at one time I feared to lose, it was now a joy

to me to put away. For Thou didst cast them from me,—Thou truest, highest, sweetness. Thou didst cast them away, and instead of them, didst enter in Thyself,—sweeter than all pleasure, though not to flesh and blood;—brighter than all light, more exalted than all honor, but not to the exalted in their own esteem."—*Augustine's Confessions, vol.* 14.

Here was an exceedingly hard case, upon which to try the power of the gospel. An ambitious young man, full of *sensuality* and literary pride, corrupted with the beginnings of Romish dogmas on the one hand, and transcendental folly on the other, driven by his convictions to fall upon God's mercy or perish. We seldom find a man of such extreme *passion*, and yet he was saved to the *uttermost*, according to the divine promise, so that it became his joy to abstain from the sins which he before loved to idolization.

It is a case, too, of narrow escape from the snare of church ceremonialism. When sick in his youth, he requested to be baptized to "wash away his sins." The delusion that baptism can do something for a dying sinner was beginning to be entertained in the church, and some then,

as now, resorted to the *ordiances* for regeneration, rather than to Christ. But recovering, as he feared he could not, the ceremony was postponed, and he continued in sin until he was thirty-two years of age, and then became a new man, as shown by his experience.

The sinner's first business is to come to Christ, and baptism will do him no good, living or dying, until he does so. But Jesus did save this proud, literary, sensual sinner, when so far enslaved to the worst of appetites and passions, that he could not well restrain himself. He had conviction,—he made confession,—he prayed, reformed, read the word of God, sought the Lord, and received a new heart, wherein he rejoiced with joy unspeakable, and full of glory, and arose to eminence in the world. Such is the power of God to save all who come to him by faith.

If any shall object that this experience indicates something of superstition, especially in the construction put upon the words strangely sung, "Take up and read," etc., we beg to reply, that admitting it, it is nothing more than we find in all classes of society, and in connection with all subjects. In this sense, everybody is

more or less superstitious. But superstition of this sort is not sin, nor is it dangerous, so long as it prompts to lawful action, as it did in the present case. All suggestions or impressions which tend to immorality, or disobedience to God's commands, evidently come from a wrong source, and should be instantly discarded. But if they incite to more faith, and fidelity toward God, and good will toward men, they may be safely followed, whether they are divine inspirations, or only the natural results of surrounding circumstances.

CHAPTER VI.

CHRISTIANITY TESTED BY ROMANISTS.

THE high pretensions of the Roman Catholic Church, so called, to religious authority and purity, are well understood. It claims the right to subordinate all peoples, by force, if necessary, to its doctrines and government, and persecutes any of its professed followers, who turn away from its ceremonies. This renders it difficult, and often exceedingly dangerous, for members of that body to become Protestants. Besides, they are trained so rigidly in the errors of their fathers, that it is quite difficult to induce them to give a thought to conflicting views. Still, they are often so impressed by the happy effects of experimental religion on its subjects, as to be induced to test it for themselves, notwithstanding their prejudices, and the danger involved. And where they do this fairly, they generally make the best of Christians. We propose in this chapter to furnish a few specimens of con-

version from different ranks and conditions of this conceited sect, beginning with

MARTIN LUTHER.

He was born Nov. 10, 1483, in Eisleben, Saxony, when the corruptions of Popery were at their height. He was educated for the Roman priesthood in due form, and was remarkably religious for his times, praying at the beginning of each day's task. His motto was : "A prayerful spirit smooths the rough path of study, and serves to remove half of its weights." While at the university at Erfurt, he had access to a chained Bible, of which, he says, he had never seen one before. He read it with intense application, and became deeply impressed with the "wrath of God, and the terrors of the judgment-day." Believing that it would contribute to his peace of mind, he entered the Convent of St. Augustine at the age of twenty-two years, and subjected himself to the rigors of the Dominican order. But the fastings, penances, vigils, and other unauthorized mortifications, which he devoutly assumed, failed to give him peace. Under these circumstances, an old man of the order comforted him by calling his

attention to the provisions of the Scriptures for the forgiveness of sins, saying, "though all men are guilty in the sight of God, yet they are freely justified by his grace, through *faith* in the redemption by Christ Jesus, without the deeds of the law." This was a new revelation to him, and enabled him, he says, "to overcome the Pope and all his doctrine and power."

Still he was a staunch Catholic, and believed that to live in Rome, the seat of the "Holy Father," must be equivalent to a residence in heaven! But when he visited the city, he was horrified by papal wickedness which he there saw. "I, too," he says, "was one of those mad saints, who rush around Rome, and crawl about the churches and miraculous grottoes there, believing all the lies that are told about them .... I officiated in the celebration of ten masses, and doubtless, too, would have worked with pleasure in the way of supplications, and other precious acts, to get father and mother out of purgatory, had they been dead instead of living."

But his conscience was not at ease. Among many other fables dished up by the Roman priests, to stuff the maw of the credulous populace, was the so-called "staircase of Pilate."

This, the priests averred, was the very staircase before the house of Pilate, in Jerusalem, upon which our Saviour stood when the Roman governor presented him to the assembled Jews with *"Ecce homo"!* By a Bull, the Pope had declared that any one who would ascend these miraculous stairs upon his knees, piously muttering a particular prayer upon every step, he or she should have full absolution for all sins, in all time and eternity.

Luther was so deluded by his education as to undertake and accomplish the feat, but it did not relieve his burdened soul, and he fell into a profound melancholy, which nearly consumed him. The suggestion of the old man about justification by faith clung to him, though he could not understand it. At length he found that a troubled spirit, and a heart yearning for salvation, can only attain rest and peace by the exercise of childlike trust in the wisdom and beneficence of Jehovah. . . . He began to understand more clearly, that man cannot compass the remission of his sins by his own works, but that the sins of every penitent heart are alone forgiven by the grace of God, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. He compre-

hended the difference between the law and the gospel,—that the law promulgates inexorable decrees, whereas the gospel extends to all men the olive-branch of everlasting peace ; drawing men to God by the Spirit, and transforming them into his heavenly image.

Speaking of this momentous period in his life, he says: "I felt that I was *born again*, and that I had discovered a wide and open door, allowing me to penetrate into paradise itself. I viewed the holy Scriptures in a far different light from what I had formerly done, and through this, discovered the true way of everlasting happiness."

His anxiety to be saved was intense. He had been trained to believe that this was to be effected by the works and sufferings imposed by Romanism, and had used them to perfection, without any good result. But trying the *new* method, for it was strangely new to him, it brought him immediate relief, and introduced him to a new and *joyous* life, explaining and demonstrating the word of God to his intellect and heart as he never saw it before, and rendering religious duties, which had been to him

the merest drudgery, a most delightful recreation.

To this new doctrine and experience, he, like Paul, was true to the last, glorying in the cross, and suffering the loss of all things to maintain and spread them among the nations. Nor did they fail him in death.—Feb. 17, 1546, being about to expire, he wrote his last prayer, as follows:

"My dear and heavenly Father! Thou God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! Thou God of truth! I thank Thee that Thou hast declared unto me Thy beloved Son Christ Jesus, in whom I believe; whom I have preached and acknowledged before all men; whom I have loved and defended; but whom the wicked Pope and his ungodly followers defame and persecute. I pray, Lord Jesus Christ, that Thou wilt take my soul into Thy gracious keeping. And O, my heavenly Father! although I must lay off this body, and am to be taken out of this life, still I know that I am to remain with Thee forevermore, and that out of Thy sacred hands nothing can take me. Receive and accept, O heavenly Father, my thanks for Thy everlasting love and mercy, for Christ's sake. Amen."

Soon after repeating this prayer, and offering some others in Latin, he said, "I am going; my spirit is ready to receive its eternal rest," and avowing his confidence in the doctrines he had preached, peacefully fell asleep in Jesus.

REV. THOMAS WALSH.

John Wesley and his helpers early showed their faith in the gospel to convert the blindest and most prejudiced of men by plunging into the citadel of Popery,—they went to Ireland. Nor was their faith vain. Many were brought to the knowledge of the truth, and became mighty workers in the vineyard of the Lord.

While Robert Swindles, a lay preacher, was addressing a large congregation at Limerick, a serious young man took his stand in the crowd, hoping to hear some words appropriate to his religious condition. His parents were rigid Romanists, and they had trained him accordingly. He represents himself as having had deep religious solicitudes in his childhood,—as being often terrified by apprehensions of death and the future state, and as making many prayers, chiefly to saints and angels. From his

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fourteenth to his sixteenth year he was especially faithful to his duties, but without finding the least relief. "The arrows of the Almighty," he says, "stuck fast in me, and my very bones trembled because of my sins." He went to confession, fasted and prayed, and tried to divert his mind by recreations under priestly advice; but "a hell was opened in his breast." At eighteen he began to doubt the pretensions of Popery, which had failed to save him from his sins or fears. He then prayed to God alone, leaving saints and angels entirely out of the question, and joined the Established Church.

But this gave him no rest,—his conscience still condemned him. It was in this state of mind that he heard the first Methodist sermon,—on the words, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden." This gave him new light, in that it showed him an all-sufficient Saviour for the greatest sinners. Following it for a short time, he says, "I was divinely assured that God for Christ's sake had forgiven me all my sins; the Spirit of God bore witness with my spirit that I was a child of God. I broke into tears of joy and love." Thus he saw in Methodism a genuine repro-

duction of the apostolic church, and gave himself to study, that he might the better promote its marvellous mission. Besides his native Irish language, he mastered the English, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. His memory was a concordance of the entire Bible. With this new life in his soul, he entered the itinerant ministry, and led thousands of his Romish countrymen to God. The story of his wonderful life is one of thrilling interest. Nothing in modern times excels it, and it all grew out of the early experience which we have briefly detailed.—He was converted to God, and became the Rev. Thomas Walsh,—one of the ablest and most successful ministers of his day.

He was as earnest and sincere in Romanism as in Methodism, but it did not save him. Why not? It *does* matter what a sincere man believes. Romanism teaches falsehood, and imposes useless burdens. Christianity presents the truth of God, and brings peace and rest, and with them implicit confidence in the holy Scriptures, which reveal the only effective plan of salvation.

A SPECIMEN FROM THE LOWER WALKS OF LIFE.

When the eloquent William Arthur, an

Irishman by birth, was in this country, several years ago, he interested thousands by the relation of the following experience, the facts of which he could attest:

"In a distant part of Ireland there lived a farmer. On a certain occasion the preacher, who was travelling the circuit, having heard of him, determined to pay him a visit, which he accordingly did. Almost as soon as he entered the house the son of Wesley opened his message, and requested the privilege of preaching in the neighborhood. This was granted; the word of God was attended with power, the Lord opened the farmer's heart, as he did that of Lydia of Thyatira, and he opened his parlor and invited the preacher to make it a preaching place. This of course was accepted with gladness, and it was not long before the farmer and his family, and several of the neighbors, were happily converted to God. A class was formed, and the farmer was appointed its leader. He had in his employ a cowherd, a Roman Catholic, who, hearing of what was going on, became greatly alarmed. It was his custom to bring the cows home at certain a hour of the day; but whenever the period arrived for meeting, he was

always sure to anticipate the time by an hour, so that he might be away, and not annoyed by the 'swaddlers,' as the Methodist preachers were called. While he was using this precaution, the Spirit of God was silently yet powerfully working in the soul of the simple-hearted man. He had heard enough of gospel truth, by rumor and otherwise, to awaken him to a sense of his lost condition, and he became sad and dispirited. As he went moping about with a dejected countenance, unfit for work, his wife said to him one day—

"'Brian, what ails you? You are good for nothing.'

"'Molly, my dear, I'm afraid I'll lose my sowl.'

"Lose your sowl, man; an' how's that? Are ye not the best man in the parish, and don't ye attend to all your dues and duties? What have ye been doing? Have ye been robbing anybody?'

"'Nae, Molly; the truth is I'm afraid I'll lose my sowl,—indade, I will lose my sowl!'

"'Why, Brian, what makes ye think that?'

"'Because,' said the deeply-convicted man, 'I'm all dirty within!'

"'My advice is that ye go immediately to the praist, and tell him all about it.'

"Brian accordingly went to see the holy father, and commenced telling him how bad he was and how badly he felt.

"'What's the matter, Brian?'

"Brian then related the conversation which passed between him and Molly, and closed by saying, 'O, holy father, I'm all dirty within!'

"'O, you dog,' said the priest, 'you have been to hear the swaddlers preach.'

"'Not I, yer riverence; I kept far enough away from them. To be sure I did, and niver a one of them have I heard prache!'

"The priest then tried to allay his fears about his losing his soul, telling him to come to confession, and attend the mass, and all would be well. But, alas! Brian grew worse and worse, until finally the priest told him to go to Loch Dergh, St. Patrick's purgatory. In the midst of Loch Dergh, or Red Lake, there was a rocky island, which was called St. Patrick's Island, or the purgatory for refractory, incurable Catholics. And indeed it was a purgatory, a bleak and dreary spot, and the banished ones were obliged to go barefooted upon the sharp stones,

and kneel upon their bare knees, fasting and praying to the Virgin, until they were restored, or had suffered sufficient to atone for their sins.

"Brian accordingly went to Loch Dergh, and crossed over to St. Patrick's purgatory, where he went through with the penance upon his bare knees. After remaining there some time he returned home.

"As soon as his wife saw him, she said, 'Well, Brian, you won't lose yer sowl now.'

"'Och, dear,' he replied, 'I've been to Loch Dergh, but I'm dirtier than I iver was before!'

"'Well, then, ye must go and see father Tom again;' which he did, and the priest meeting him, said, 'Well, Brian, it's all right now.'

"'Nae, holy father, I'm dirtier and dirtier!'

"'Brian,' said the priest, 'you must try and get your spirits up. There is to be a dance at such a place; go, and don't forget to take a drop; it will do you good.'

"Brian, supposing that any advice from the clergy was right, never having been instructed otherwise, went to the dance, and did take a drop, but it was a drop too much, and he became intoxicated. He came home late at

night, and his wife was awakened by hearing him rolling and roaring on the floor, saying, 'Sure, an' I'll lose my sowl!' She became alarmed, and commenced crying, and together they wept and prayed as well as they knew how until morning.

"That day he went to his work, and, as usual, brought the cows home for his master; but forgot that it was the day of the meeting. He concluded to stay and hear the preaching. The text was, 'What must I do to be saved?' He found the sermon wonderfully to correspond with his own thoughts, and he became intensely interested. The preacher alluded to the different answers sometimes given to the question, 'What must I do to be saved?' and among others he remarked the poor convicted sinner is told by the priest to go to Loch Dergh, and he will be saved.

"'Och, I'll declare,' said Brian audibly, 'it's me, sure. Haven't I been there?'

"'Sometimes he is asked to go and drink, and drive away his sorrows.'

"'Och, and wasn't it only yisterday the praste towld me to do that same; and the divil's advice it was, too.'

"At this the master went out, and brought him in and quieted him. After the preaching was ended Brian whispered to his master and said, 'I would like to stay and spake to that gintleman.' When the congregation was dismissed, and they were about to hold class-meeting, his master requested him to stay, which he did; and when he was spoken to he got up and told the whole story we have been relating. 'You say,' addressing the preacher, 'that if I believe on the Lord Jesus Christ I shall be saved. How do you know that?'

"'By the word of God,' said the preacher.

"'An' have you that word?'

"'Here it is,' said he, holding up the Bible.

"Brian sat down comforted; but before the class was through he sprang to his feet, and, seizing the preacher, he said, 'What ails me, sir? I don't feel bad any more at all, at all; I'm all clean within.'

"'You are converted,' the preacher replied.

"'And whin will ye convert again? I'd like to have Molly converted.'

"He went home a happy man, walking, and leaping, and praising God. When he met his wife he exclaimed, 'O Molly, I'm clane within;

the Lord Jesus Christ has converted my sowl.' On Sunday morning he took Molly with him to meeting, and it was not long until she was brought to taste the pardoning love of God. Still Brian had not forgotten his church, and he said to his master, 'Shall I go to mass?' The master, believing he was under the teachings and guidance of the Spirit, told him to go if he desired; he and Molly accordingly went to church, and after the ceremony of reading the prayers in Latin was over, the priest, addressing Brian and his wife, said, 'Come up here, you heretic dog!' (Many a man has thus been singled out and denounced from the altar, and not long after had a bullet shot through his heart.)

"'You have deceived me, you arch heretic,' continued the priest; 'you have been to hear the swaddlers.'

"'Yes, your riverence, glory be to God! I have been converted, and so has Molly.'

"'How dare you speak to me thus! Go down on your knees before the altar and pray to the Virgin, or I'll curse you bell, book, and candle.'

"Finding him unyielding, he then uttered

the curse before the whole congregation. Candles were placed around, and at the ringing of a bell the curse began. All the saints and angels, and holy martyrs were invoked to curse him. The curse went into detail, extending to every member of his body from his hair down to his toes. He was cursed in all possible conditions and circumstances in life. Such a curse everlasting malice only could invent. The person cursed was cut off from all the sympathies and aid of the congregation; and if he were a merchant, mechanic, or laboring man, all custom would at once be withdrawn. After the curse he was permitted to leave, and he went out notwithstanding a happy man; for how can a priest 'curse whom God has not cursed?' Brian and Molly led consistent and pious lives, died in the faith, and went up to glory."

To these we might add many cases that have come under the writer's personal observation. He has hardly witnessed any considerable revival, in which more or less Romanists were not converted. The faith of the Church is altogether too weak in regard to this class of sinners, for whom Christ died. If we would seek earnestly to win them to God as we do

to convert the heathen, drunkards, and some others, we should find them more susceptible of being impressed than many imagine. They are already religious, in their way. It is no cross to them to kneel or pray. All they need is to see a better way,—a way of purity and peace, which they do not find in their own Church. And when they once find it, they will follow it with more fidelity and perseverance than those who have had no religion.

To those, therefore, who anxiously ask, "What can we do with the Romanists?" I answer, persuade them to test our religion for themselves, and thus convert them to God. If they cannot read a word, they can hear, and understand, and believe, sufficiently to be accepted and renewed by the Holy Ghost. Herein is seen the adaptation of the Christian religion to the ignorant masses,—they can test it by experiment, though unable to comprehend the mighty argument by which it is supported, so as to say in confidence, "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see."

CHAPTER VII.

THREE MARKED CASES OF DEMONSTRATIVE EXPERIENCE IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

REV. JOHN WESLEY.

This celebrated minister was born at Epworth, England, June 17, 1703, and was religiously educated and regularly graduated to the priesthood in the Established Church, according to the custom of that day. His youth was characterized by unblemished morality and even piety, while his intellect and scholarship placed him foremost among his companions. In his zeal for the spread of the gospel, he sailed for America Oct. 21, 1735, with the view of exercising the priestly functions in the Georgia Colony, and converting the neighboring Indians. He was a rigid, talented, high churchman, sincerely so,—and failing to accomplish his purposes, soon returned home, a wiser man then when he left. The chief benefit of this singular adventure may be inferred from his own statement, as follows :—

"It is now two years and almost four months since I left my native country, in order to teach the Georgian Indians the nature of Christianity: but what have I learned myself in the meantime? Why, what I the least expected, that I who went to America to convert others, was never myself converted to God. I am not mad, though I thus speak; but I speak the words of truth and soberness; if haply some of those who still dream [embracing most of the ministers and people], may awake and see that as I am so are they .... This then have I learned in the ends of the earth, that I am fallen short of the glory of God; that my whole heart is altogether corrupt and abominable, ... that alienated as I am from the life of God, I am a child of wrath, an heir of hell, that my own works, my own sufferings, my own righteousness, are so far from reconciling me to an offended God, so far from making any atonement for the least of those sins which are more in number than the hairs of my head, that the most specious of them need an atonement themselves, or they cannot abide his righteous judgment: that .... I have no hope but that of being justified freely through the redemption that is

in Jesus. I have no hope, but that if I seek I shall find Christ, and be found in him, not having my own righteousness, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."—*Works, vol.* 3, *p.* 56.

This was his starting point in spiritual religion,—his first proper *conviction.* He received it through the pious Moravians, whom he met on his American trip. It not only astonished himself, but his friends. "They could never think," he says, "that I had not faith, who had done and suffered such things. My brother was very angry, and told me I did not know the mischief I had done by talking thus."—*Ibid. p.* 66.

With this conviction, he began to seek God by all scriptural means, preaching the truth as he now understood it, consulting the Moravians, and praying for mercy. Many of his old opinions clung to him with great tenacity, but Peter Bohler exploded one after another, until he apprehended the simple truth, and was born of the Spirit. His own account of it runs thus:—

"When I met Peter Bohler again, he consented to put the dispute upon the issue which I desired, namely, *Scripture* and *experience.* I

first consulted the Scripture. But when I set aside the glosses of men, and simply considered the words of God, comparing them together, I found they all made against me, and was forced to retreat to my last hold, that experience would never agree with the literal interpretation of those Scriptures. Nor could I, therefore, allow it to be true, till I found some living witnesses of it! He replied, that he could show me such, at any time,—if I desired it, the next day. And accordingly, the next day he came again with three others, all of whom testified, of their own personal experience, that a true living faith in Christ is inseparable from a sense of pardon for all past, and freedom from all present sins. They added with one mouth, that this faith was a gift, the free gift of God; and that he would surely bestow it upon every soul who earnestly and perseveringly sought it. I was now thoroughly convinced; and by the grace of God I resolved to seek it unto the end.

1. "By absolutely renouncing all dependence, in whole or in part, upon my *own* works of righteousness, on which I had really grounded my hope of salvation, though I knew it not, from my youth up.

2. "By adding to the use of all other means of grace, continued prayer for this very thing, justifying, saving faith, a full reliance on the blood of Christ shed for *me;*—a trust in him, as *my* Christ, as my sole justification, satisfaction and redemption.

"I continued thus to seek it (though with strange indifference, dulness and coldness, and unusually frequent relapses into sin) till Wednesday May 24, 1738. I think it was about five in the morning, that I opened my Testament on these words, 'There are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, even that ye should be partakers of the Divine nature.' (2 Peter i. 4.) Just as I went out I opened it again on these words, 'Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.' In the afternoon I was asked to go to St. Paul's. The anthem was, 'Out of the deep have I called unto thee, O, Lord! Lord, hear my voice, O let thine ears consider well the voice of my complaint. · If thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O Lord, who may abide it? For there is mercy with thee: therefore shalt thou be feared. O Lord, trust in the Lord: for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous

redemption. And he shall redeem Israel from all sin.'

"In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate street, where one was reading Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing what God works in the heart, through faith in Christ, I felt my heart *strangely warmed.* I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for my salvation: and an assurance was given me, that he had taken away *my* sins, even *mine,* and saved *me* from the law of sin and death. I began to pray with all my might for those who had in a more special manner despitefully used me and persecuted me. I then testified openly to all there, what I now first felt in my heart. But it was not long before the enemy suggested, 'this cannot be faith; for where is the joy?' Then was I taught, that peace and victory over sin are essential to faith in the Captain of our salvation; but as to the transports of joy that usually attend the beginning of it, especially in those who have mourned deeply, God sometimes giveth, sometimes withholdeth them, according to the counsels of his own will.

"After my return home I was much buffetted with temptations; but cried out, and they fled away. They returned again and again. I as often lifted up my eyes, and He sent me help from His holy place. And herein I found the difference between this and my former state chiefly consisted. I was striving, yea, fighting with all my might under the law, as well as under grace. But then I was sometimes, if not often, conquered; now, I was always conqueror. The moment I awaked [the next morning] 'Jesus Master' was in my heart and in my mouth; and I found all my strength lay in keeping my eye fixed upon him, and my soul waiting on him continually. Being at St. Paul's again in the afternoon, I could taste the good word of God in the anthem, which began, 'My song shall be always of the loving kindness of the Lord.' . . . Yet the enemy injected a fear, 'If thou dost believe, why is there not a more sensible change?' I answered (yet not I), That I know not. But this I know, I have now peace with God. And I sin not to-day, and Jesus my master has forbid me to take thought for the morrow."—*Works, vol.* 3, *pp.* 73–75.

His experience immediately following his con-

version, above described, may be inferred from his diary. He says, speaking of meeting a Mr. Wolf, "I was much strengthened by the grace of God in him; yet was his state so far above mine, that I was often tempted to doubt whether we had one faith. But without much reasoning, I held here: Though his be strong and mine *weak*, yet God hath given some *degree* of faith, even to me, I know by its fruits. For I have continual *peace*,—not one uneasy thought. And I have *freedom* from *sin*, not one unholy desire."—*Ibid. p.* 74.

A little later in his progress, he wrote, "In the evening, while I was reading prayers at Snowsfields, I found such light and strength as I never remember to have had before. I saw every thought as well as action or word, just as it was rising in my heart, and whether it was right before God, or tainted with pride or selfishness. I never knew before (I mean not as at this time) what it was 'to be still before God.'" The next day he wrote, "I waked, by the grace of God in the same spirit; and about eight, being with two or three that believed in Jesus, I felt such an awe and tender sense of the presence of God, as greatly confirmed me there-

in ; so that God was before me all the day long. I sought and found him in every place ; and could truly say, when I lay down at night, 'Now I have lived a day.'"—*Ibid. p.* 324.

Mr. Wesley, we think, never professed to have obtained the entire sanctification, which he so ably explained and defended ; but it is worthy of consideration whether his experience as here given, is not a fair representation of that grace. It seems that he was saved by faith from the *power* and practice of *sin*, and was filled with peace, and at times, and often, with *joy* in the Holy Ghost. Certainly he laid all upon the altar, and sought the Lord with his whole heart. Was he not one of the exceptional cases of entire sanctification in pretty close connection with justification, which he admitted to be possible?

His reliance upon *experience* as an argument in support of justification by faith alone, is worthy of notice. He saw readily that the doctrine, if true, is demonstrable by experiment and demanded witnesses, which his friend Bohler promptly produced. He took the same course afterward with regard to the higher life, producing competent witnesses, who claimed to

have attained to its experience. In this he was wise above his acknowledged tutors. And he was not less bold than wise, because he allowed individuals, whether learned or ignorant, to settle the question for themselves.

REV. GEORGE WHITEFIELD.

This wonderful man was born in Gloucester, England, Dec. 16, 1714. Spiritual religion was at that time very low, involving more of formalism than life. We know little of Whitefield's childhood and youth. His biographer says of him, that, "judged by the terrible scrutiny of his own severe standard of self-examination in after life, he was pre-eminently debased, and proved his native depravity of disposition by a series of most wantonly wicked actions," yet he had a tender conscience. He describes himself as froward from his birth; so brutish as to hate instruction; stealing from his mother's pocket, and frequently appropriating to his own use the money that he took in the house. "If I trace myself," he says, "from my cradle to my manhood, I can see nothing in me but a fitness to be damned."

But going to Oxford, and becoming con-

nected with the Holy Club, of which John Wesley was the leading spirit, he began to seek the Lord by many fastings and crucifixions, somewhat after the style of Romanism, until he brought on a sickness, which nearly cost him his life. "Whenever I knelt down," he says, "I felt great pressure both on soul and body; and have often prayed under the weight of it till the sweat came through me. God only knows how many nights I have lain upon my bed, groaning under what I felt. Whole days and weeks have I spent lying prostrate on the ground in silent and vocal prayer."

This is man's way, not God's—not the way of *faith*, but of works and sufferings. But it brought him to the point after all, for he says:

"Notwithstanding my fit of sickness continued six or seven weeks, I trust I shall have reason to bless God for it through the endless ages of eternity. For, about the end of the seventh week, after having undergone innumerable buffettings of Satan, and many months of inexplicable trials, by night and by day, under the spirit of bondage, God was pleased at length to remove the heavy load, and enable me to lay hold on his dear Son by a living faith,

and by giving me the spirit of adoption, to seal me, as I humbly hope, even to the day of everlasting redemption. But oh! with what *joy*, *joy unspeakable*, even joy that was full of, and big with glory, was my soul filled, when the weight of sin went off, and an abiding sense of the pardoning love of God, and a full assurance of faith, broke in upon my disconsolate soul! Surely it was the day of my espousal,—a day to be had in everlasting remembrance. At first my joys were like a spring tide, and, as it were, overflowed the banks. Go where I would, I could not avoid the singing of psalms, almost aloud; afterwards they became more settled, and, blessed be God, saving a few casual intervals, have abode and increased in my soul ever since."

This was the beginning of his *knowledge* of God, though he had always cherished a sort of theoretical belief in him. He had also believed that there is something in religion more than a mere sentiment, or ceremony, but now he *knew* it, and just what it is. He had *tasted* and seen that the Lord is good, and it had opened up to him the word of God, which was comparatively sealed before. It gave him an inter-

est and delight in it, too, making him, as it did, an heir of its promises, that he could not have without it. It was the beginning of his power, and inspired his unparalleled eloquence and effectiveness. He would hardly have been heard of outside of his little home-circle without it; but with it his fame filled the Christian world. And what it did for him, it would do for many now, who are plodding along in the icy bondage of intellectual formalism.

REV. CHARLES WESLEY.

This remarkable man was born about five years after his brother John, at Epworth, England, and like him was educated for the priesthood in the Established Church, and graduated to this office without being converted to God, or knowing anything of the nature of that work. He was a high churchman in the strict sense of the word, and was much tried with his brother's divergencies from the regular routine required by the Church. Hence, when John became awakened, and avowed himself in the bonds of iniquity, though fastidiously religious, judged by the standards of the day, Charles was exceedingly angry, as we have

before shown. He probably thought that in so saying, John condemned him, and the church generally, as he really did. But he was not then aware of their condition. His low estate may be inferred from the following entry in his journal a little before, Dec. 18, 1736:

"I began my twenty-seventh year in a murmuring, discontented spirit; reading over and over the third of Job." While in this state of mind he wrote his "Hymn for Midnight," which indicates the deepest gloom and hopelessness with regard to much pleasure in this life. A single verse will suffice to show that he was not in the mood that afterward gave birth to his unparalleled hymns, now sung in many churches:

"Fain would I leave this earth below,
Of pain and sin and dark abode;
Where shadowy joy, or solid woe,
Allures or tears me from my God;
Doubtful and insecure of bliss,
Since death alone confirms me his."

But reading the same books, and conversing with the same happy subjects of converting grace which awakened his brother, he was soon brought to see that he, also, needed to be converted. Peter Bohler was of great service to

him in this particular. Having had several interviews with him, Mr. Bohler called to see him when sick, and in much pain.

"He asked me," he says, "'Do you hope to be saved?' 'Yes.' 'For what reason do you hope it?' 'Because I have used my best endeavors to serve God. He shook his head, and said no more. I thought him very uncharitable, saying in my heart, 'What, are not my endeavors a sufficient ground of hope? Would he rob me of my endeavors? I have nothing else to trust to.'"

His hostility to the new faith was very strong, but during another conversation with Mr. Bohler, the Lord opened his eyes to see the nature of that faith which saves through grace. "For some days following I felt a faint longing for faith," he says, "and could pray for nothing else. . . . I seemed determined to speak of, and wish for, nothing but faith in Christ. Yet could not this preserve me from sin, which I this day ran into with my eyes open; so that after ten years' vain struggling, I own and feel it absolutely unconquerable. I was just going to remove to old Mr. Hutton's, when God sent Mr. Bray to me: a poor ignorant mechanic,

who knows nothing but Christ; yet by knowing him, knows and discerns all things. . . . We prayed together for faith. I was quite overpowered, and melted into tears." He then went to Mr. Bray's house to board. "Mr. Bray," he says, "read me many comfortable scriptures, which greatly strengthened my desire, so that I believed that I should not leave his house before I believed with my heart unto righteousness." Ten days after this, Charles Wesley entered into that state of spiritual liberty and enjoyment which he preferred to everything else, both in earth and heaven. He was humble, penitent and teachable.

"May 21st, 1738," he wrote, "I waked in hope and expectation of His coming. At nine my brother and some friends came in and sung a hymn to the Holy Ghost. My comfort and hope were hereby increased. In about half an hour they went. I betook myself to prayer, the substance as follows: 'O Jesus, thou hast said, I will come unto you. Thou hast said, I will send the Comforter unto you. Thou hast said, My Father and I will come unto you, and make our abode with you. Thou art God, who canst not lie. I wholly rely upon thy most

true promise. Accomplish it in thy time and manner.' Having said this, I was composing myself to sleep, in quietness and peace, when I heard one come in and say, 'In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, arise, and believe, and thou shalt be healed of all thy infirmities!' The words struck me to the heart. I sighed and said within myself, O, that Christ would but speak thus to me!" After some further conversation, he adds, "My heart sunk within me, and I felt a strange palpitation, and said, yet feared to say, I *believe!* I *believe!*" The words that impressed him so deeply, were uttered by a poor illiterate woman, who saw his distressed condition, and fearing to assume to teach so eminent a minister, pronounced them in his hearing while standing upon the stairs. "I never heard words uttered," he declares, "with like solemnity. . . . I rose and looked into the scripture, and read, 'Now, Lord, what is my hope? Truly my hope is even in thee.' And then again, 'He hath put a new song in my mouth, even a thanksgiving unto our God,' and 'Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and say unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that

her iniquity is pardoned; for she hath received at the Lord's hand double for all her sins.'" He continues:—

"I now found myself at peace with God, and rejoiced in hope of loving Christ. My temper for the rest of the day was distrust of my own great, but before unknown, weakness. I saw that by faith I stood." He now sung as he never did before in these lines:—

"O how shall I the goodness tell,
Father, which thou to me hast showed?
That I, a child of wrath and hell,
I should be called a child of God,
Should know, should feel, my sins forgiven,
Blest with this antepast of heaven?"

Immediately upon his conversion, he recorded his experience thus:—

"Long my imprisoned spirit lay
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray;
I woke; the dungeon flamed with light;
My chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed thee.

No condemnation now I dread;
Jesus, and all in him is mine!
Alive in him, my living Head,
And clothed in righteousness divine,
Bold I approach the eternal throne,
And claim the crown through Christ my own."

Hence, it appears, that though Charles Wesley bitterly opposed his brother John when

he began to seek the Lord by faith, he obtained the prize first. A few days after, however, John's heart was "*strangely warmed,*" as we have seen, when they met and rejoiced together. It is no uncommon thing in this particular for the last to be first, and the first last. Many seekers have seen their persecutors happily converted, while they still remained in darkness.

Charles Wesley's biographer, in summing up the result of the conversion of these eminent brothers, says :—

"To the principles which John and Charles Wesley recognized in the act of their conversion, they steadily adhered to the end of their lives. The careful study of the holy Scriptures, their acquaintance with Protestant theology, and their observation of the work of God in his church, all served to strengthen their conviction that they had not been misled in *submitting to the test of experience* the doctrine of salvation by faith, which they first learned from Peter Bohler. They saw with increasing clearness, that the Christian faith which is described in the Acts of the Apostles, and in the Apostolic Epistles, is not a mere assent to the general

truth of the gospel, nor a mere belief of its essential doctrines, but a *personal trust* in the sacrificial blood of the Son of God, exercised in a *penitent* state of heart, and productive of *peace of conscience, and of inward and outward holiness.* This became the principal topic of their ministry; and while its truth was to them matter of personal consciousness, they saw it exemplified in the character of thousands of their spiritual children. It was in fact the great *secret of their power,* both as preachers and writers. Under the divine sanction and blessing, they illustrated and defended this doctrine with unexampled energy and effect. It was a happy day, not only for themselves, but for the world, when after a protracted course of painful preparation, they received this truth, and were qualified to preach it to all men, out of the fullness of a heart purified by faith.

"For the long space of ten years had Charles been laboring after holiness, without attaining to it, and for the longer space of twelve or thirteen years had John been engaged in the same pursuit, and with the same want of success. They were still in the state described in the seventh chapter of Romans. They 'were carnal,

sold under sin.' Their struggles to get free from it were powerless and unavailing; so that, after a thousand resolutions and efforts, they could only lament in the bitterness of disappointed hope, 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' Now, they were translated from the legal to the evangelical state; and could testify with the apostle, 'Being justified by faith we have *peace* with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and *rejoice* in the hope of the glory of God.'—'The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.'—'Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.'

"Their friend, the Rev. John Gambold, one of their Oxford companions, received the truth at the same time, and through the same instrumentality. Like them, he had long been wandering in the labyrinths of mysticism. Emerging into light, he appositely denominated

the evangelical method of justification by faith, 'the sinner's short way to God.'

"The day on which Mr. Charles Wesley came to Christ, weary and heavy laden, and found rest to his soul, was unquestionably the most important period of his existence. . . . His spiritual enjoyments now began, in all their richness and depth; and he entered upon a course of ministerial usefulness, of which he had previously no conception. His conscience was tender. The means of grace were his delight. . . . Never did he forget the bright and joyous days which followed his espousal to Christ. Many years after he drew the following beautiful picture of the work and its results, as felt by the young believer:—

"'How happy are they who the Saviour obey,
And have laid up their treasure above!
Tongue can never express the sweet comfort and peace
Of a soul in its earliest love.

That sweet comfort was mine, when the favor divine
I received through the blood of the Lamb;
When my heart it believed, what a joy I received,—
What a heaven in Jesus's name!

'Twas a heaven below my Saviour to know;
The angels could do nothing more
Than fall at his feet, and the story repeat,
And the Lover of sinners adore.

Jesus all the day long was my joy and my song :
O that all his salvation might see !
He hath loved me, I cried, he hath suffer'd and died,
To redeem even rebels like me.

On the wings of his love I was carried above
All sin, and temptation, and pain ;
I could not believe that I ever should grieve,
That I ever should suffer again.

I rode on the sky, freely justified I !
Nor envied Elijah his seat ;
My soul mounted higher in a chariot of fire,
And the moon it was under my feet.

O the rapturous height of that holy delight
Which I felt in the life-giving blood ;
Of my Saviour possess'd, I was perfectly blest,
As if filled with the fullness of God.'"

I have written thus particularly of the conversion of the Wesleys for the benefit of seekers and others, who are in danger of underestimating the greatness of the work of justification. It is a marvellous change. If sinners would seek it in all its fullness and demonstration they would have less trouble with their hearts afterward than professors generally experience. Repentance and faith which do not embrace pretty thorough reformation and conformity to the will of God, are not the kind that produce radical or lasting results. We must die unto sin, if we will live unto holiness. Many are evidently making the attainment of

religion too easy to secure the real thing. They discard "*joy* in the Holy Ghost," as a necessary evidence of its existence, and accept conditions of religious fellowship, far below those of Whitefield and the Wesleys, when they were yet without hope in the world.

These experiences show, too, the importance of conversion to ministers, however religiously trained, or completely educated. These men were models in morality and literary polish, and yet they were powerless for the salvation of others until they repented and were born of the Spirit. Then they shook the world. What a pity that many pastors of the present day do not feel their spiritual need, and cry to God until they experience the joy of his salvation! A little reviving is not enough; they must be "*born again*," and come to know that they are children of God. Nothing can be more proper in them, or any other professors of religion, who are not happy in Christ, than to confess their defects and seek the Lord until he shall bring them up out of the horrible pit, put a new song in their mouths, and establish their goings in the way of conscious holiness.

And we may truthfully add, that there is

nothing in religion so attractive to miserable sinners, or formal professors, as JOY IN GOD AND IN HIS SERVICE. This is the great need of the churches to-day. They have general intelligence, morality far above the average citizen, respectability, and some other advantages, but show by their worldliness and love of amusement, that God does not satisfy them. When will they come to "Rejoice evermore?"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE EXPERIENCES OF OTHER EMINENT MEN TO THE SAME EFFECT.

IF Christianity could be demonstrated in the way proposed only by one class of persons, that fact would expose it to suspicion. But inviting experiment from all classes, and sustaining itself with all who have the fairness to test its truth, it is entitled to unwavering confidence. The witnesses presented in the last chapter were men of marked intelligence, and ministers of the gospel. They had been taught to believe in justification and holiness of some sort from their youth, and that these graces should be sought in some way, and may be obtained at some time—more likely at death than before. But hearing of the plan of salvation here vindicated, they put it to the test of experience and found it true. Now we come to notice other classes, whose circumstances were quite different, and who, by following such light as they could command, arrived at the same conclusion.

Their beginning was unpromising, but seeking the Lord and committing their ways to him, they were led in pleasant paths and to results altogether more convincing and satisfactory than they had apprehended.

JOHN WILLIAM DE LA FLETCHER,

who, by common consent, was distinguished as one of the most able and saintly characters of his day, was born in Switzerland, Sept. 12, 1729, and was early the subject of serious impressions, which soon passed away, as is commonly the case, where they are not nursed by proper religious instruction. Though much inclined to learning, his predominant passion was for military life, and he took incipient steps in that direction, against the wishes of his parents. But going to London about 1754, he providentially heard of John Wesley and his people, and sought their acquaintance. Their views of religion impressed him favorably, and he sought and found the Lord under their advice, of which we have his own account, as follows :—

"The 12th of January, in the year 1755, I received the sacrament of the Lord's Supper

(in the Church of England), though my heart was as hard as a stone. The following day I felt the tyranny of sin more than ever, and an uncommon coldness in all religious duties. I felt the burden of my corruptions heavier than ever; there was no rest in my flesh. I called upon the Lord, but in such heaviness as made me fear it was lost labor. Many a time did I take up the Bible to seek comfort; but not being able to read, I shut it again. The thoughts which engrossed my mind were these: 'I am undone, I have wandered from God more than ever. I have trampled under foot the frequent convictions which God has wrought in my heart. Instead of going straight to Christ, I have wasted my time in fighting against sin by the sole use of the means of grace, as if the means would do me good without the blessing of God. I never had faith; and without faith it is impossible to please God: therefore all my thoughts, words, and works, however specious before men, are utterly sinful before God. And if I am not changed before I go hence, I am lost to all eternity.'

"When I saw all my endeavors avail nothing against my conquering sin, I almost gave up

all hope, and resolved to sin on and go to hell. Yet I had a strange thought, 'If I go to hell, I will praise God there. And since I cannot be a monument of his mercy in heaven, I will be a monument of his justice in hell.' But I soon recovered my ground. I thought, 'Christ died for all; therefore he died for me. He died to pluck such sinners as I am out of the devil's teeth. And as I sincerely desire to be his, he will surely take me to himself. He will surely let me know before I die, that he has died for me. If he leaves me for a while in this dreadful state, it is only to show me the depth he draws me out of.' But then I thought, 'Perhaps he will do it only at my dying hour. And must I sin on till then? How can I endure this?' But I thought again, 'My Saviour was above three-and-thirty years on earth. Let me wait for him many years, and then I may have some excuse for my impatience. Does God owe me anything? Is he bound to time or place? Do I deserve anything at his hands but damnation?' Yet anger was always one of the sins which I could not overcome. I went on sinning and repenting, and sinning

again, but still calling on God's mercy through Christ.

"I was now beat out of all my strongholds. I felt my helplessness, and lay at the feet of Christ. I cried, 'Save me, Lord, as a brand plucked out of the fire! Give me justifying faith; for the devil will surely reign over me, till thou takest me into thy hand. I shall only be an instrument in his hand to work wickedness, till thou stretch out thy almighty hand, and save thy lost creature by free, unmerited grace.' I seldom went to private prayer (a great mistake) but this thought came into my mind, 'This may be the happy hour when thou wilt prevail with God!' But still I was disappointed. I cried to God; but my heart did not go with my lips. I prayed, but often could hardly keep awake. When overcome with heaviness, I went to bed, beseeching God to spare me till the next day, that I might renew my wrestling with him, till I should prevail.

"On Sunday the 19th, in the evening, I heard an excellent sermon on these words, 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.' I heard it attentively, but my heart was not moved. I

was only still more convinced that I was an unbeliever, and that till I had faith I should not have peace. The hymn after sermon suited the subject, but I could not join in singing it. So I sat mourning, while others rejoiced. I went home, still resolving to wrestle with the Lord, like Jacob, till I should become a prevailing Israel.

"I begged of God, the following day, to show me the wickedness of my heart. I besought him to increase my convictions; for I was afraid I did not mourn enough for my sins. But I found relief in Mr. Wesley's Journal, where I learned that we should not build on what we *feel*, but go to Christ with all our sins and hardness of heart. On the 21st, I wrote down part of what filled my heart; namely, a confession of my sins, misery and helplessness, together with a resolution to seek Christ even unto death. In the evening I read the Scriptures, and found a sort of pleasure in seeing a picture of my own wickedness exactly drawn in the third of the Romans, and that of my present condition in the seventh. I often wished to be acquainted with somebody who had been in my condition; and resolved to seek for one

to whom I might unbosom my whole soul. On Thursday Satan beset me hard : I sinned, and grievously too. And now I almost gave up all hope ; I was on the brink of despair ; and nevertheless continued to fall into sin as often as I had temptation. But I must observe, that though I frequently thought hell would be my portion, yet I never was much afraid of it ; whether this was owing to a secret hope, or to hardness of heart, I know not. But I was continually crying out, 'What stupidity ! I see myself hanging over hell, as it were, by a single thread ! And yet I am not afraid, but sin on ! O what is man without the grace of God ! A very devil in wickedness, though inferior to him in power !' In the evening I went to a sincere friend, and told him something of my state. He endeavored to administer comfort ; but it was not suited to my state. When we parted he gave me some advice which was better suited to my condition. 'God,' said he, 'is merciful ; God loves you ; and if he denies you any thing, it is for your good. You deserve nothing at his hands ; but wait patiently for him, and never give up your hope.' I went home, re-

solved to follow his advice, though I should stay till death.

"I proposed to receive the Lord's Supper on the following Sunday. I therefore returned to my room, and looked out a sacramental hymn. I learned it by heart, and prayed it over many times, intending to repeat it at the table. Then I went to bed with rather more hope and peace than I had felt for some time. But Satan worked though I slept. I dreamed I had committed a grievous and abominable sin. I waked amazed and confounded, but fell upon my knees and prayed with more faith than usual; and afterward went about my business with uncommon cheerfulness. It was not long before I was tempted by my besetting sin; but I found it had no power. My soul was not even ruffled. I took no notice of this at first. But having withstood the temptation again and again, I perceived it was the Lord's doing. Afterward it was suggested, 'It is presumption for such a sinner to hope for so great a mercy!' I prayed that I might not be in a delusion; and the more I prayed, the more clearly I saw it was real. For though sin stirred all day long, I always overcame it in the name of the Lord.

"In the evening I read the experience of some of God's children, and found mine agreed with theirs. Hereby my faith was strengthened and my hope considerably increased: I entreated the Lord to deal with his servant according to his mercy, and take all the glory to himself. I prayed earnestly, and was persuaded that I should have peace with God and dominion over sin; not doubting but the full assurance also would be given in God's good time. I continued calling on him for an increase of faith (for still I had some fear of being in a delusion); and having continued my supplication till near one in the morning, I opened my Bible on these words: 'Cast thy burden on the Lord, and he shall sustain thee. He will not suffer the righteous to be moved!' Filled with joy, I fell upon my knees, to beg of God that I might always cast my burden upon him. My hope was now greatly increased; and I thought I saw myself conqueror over sin, hell and all manner of affliction.

"With this comfortable promise, I shut up my Bible, being now perfectly satisfied. As I shut it, I cast my eyes on that word, 'Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, I will do it.'

So having asked grace of God to serve him till death, I went cheerfully to bed."—*Wesley's Works, vol.* 6, *pp.* 431–133.

"So far," says Mr. Wesley, "we have Mr. Fletcher's own account, under his own hand. From this time he 'had the witness in himself,'—he *knew* that he had 'redemption through the blood of Christ, even the forgiveness of sins.' But he still continued pleading with the Lord to take a fuller possession of his heart; till one day, as he was in earnest prayer, lying prostrate on his face before God, he saw, as it were, our blessed Lord hanging and bleeding on the cross; and at the same time these words were spoken with power to his heart:—

"'Seized by the rage of sinful men,
I see him bound, and bruised, and slain.
'Tis done! The Martyr dies!
His life to ransom ours is given;
And, lo! the fiercest fire of heaven
Consumes the sacrifice!

He suffers both for men and God,
He bears the universal load
Of guilt and misery!
He suffers to reverse our doom,
And, lo! my Lord is here become
The bread of life to me.'

. . . . "Now all his bonds were broken; he breathed a purer air, and was able to say with

confidence, 'The life I now live, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.' By means of this faith, sin was under his feet. Knowing in whom he had believed, he could continually triumph in the Lord, and praise the God of his salvation.

"From this time he walked cheerfully as well as valiantly in the ways of God. He closely followed the Master, denying himself, and taking up his cross daily."

This was the real beginning of his beautiful life. The end was still more brilliant, full of glory. And his mighty "Checks" and other works followed him, and are likely to be read so long as God shall have a Church on earth. May this transcript of his early experience help many an anxious young man into the light of perfect love.

ADAM CLARKE, D.D., LL.D.,

was born in Ireland, in 1760, in the midst of religious forms, without the power, on the one hand, and blank infidelity on the other. His attention was early called to the Bible, and his mother did much to train him for God. But he grew up to enjoy the usual pleasures of the

world, maintaining a reputable moral character. In his young manhood he went to hear a Methodist preacher, the first he ever saw, and was so far impressed as to desire to hear him again, which he did with increasing interest. With this, and reading the Scriptures, he became seriously bent on the salvation of his soul, though not violently affected. Speaking of himself as a third person, he says :—

"The Spirit was working his great work of mercy in his soul, convincing him of sin, of righteousness, and judgment, awakening him alike to a sense of guilt, and a despair of escaping its punishment, if left to his own bankrupt resources. All his past diligence, prayer, reading, and so forth, now appeared as nothing. . . . He was filled with confusion and distress ; wherever he looked he saw nothing but himself. . . . He wished to flee from himself, and looked with envy on stocks and stones. . . . He said with one of old, 'O, that I knew where I might find Him, that I might come even to His seat ! Behold I go forward, but He is not there ; and backward, but I cannot perceive Him ; on the left hand, where He doth work, but I cannot behold Him ; He hideth Him-

self on the right hand, that I cannot see Him.'

"One morning," he says, "in great distress of soul, he went out to his work in the field. He began, but could not proceed, so great was his mental anguish. He fell down on his knees on the earth, and prayed, but seemed to be without power or faith. He arose and endeavored to work, but could not; even his physical strength seemed to have departed from him. He again endeavored to pray; but the gates of heaven seemed as if barred against him. His faith in the atonement seemed, so far as it concerned himself, almost entirely gone; he could not believe that Jesus had died *for him.* The thickest darkness seemed to gather around and settle on his soul. He fell flat on his face on the earth, and endeavored to pray, but still there was no answer; he arose, but he was so weak that he could scarcely stand. His agonies were indescribable; he seemed to be forever separated from God and the glory of his power. Death in any form he could have preferred to his present feelings, if that death could be an end to them. No fear of hell produced these terrible conflicts. He had not God's appro-

bation ; he had not God's image. He felt that without a sense of his favor he could not live. Where to go, what to say, and what to do, he found not ; even the words of prayer at last failed; and he could neither plead or wrestle with God. . . . It is said that the time of man's extremity is the time of God's opportunity. He now felt strongly in his soul, 'Pray to *Christ*.' . . . He looked up, confidently, to the Saviour of sinners. His agony subsided, his soul became calm. A glow of happiness thrilled through his frame ; all guilt and condemnation were gone. . . . He looked to heaven, and all was sunshine ; he searched for his distress, but could not find it. He felt indescribably happy, but could not tell the cause ; a change had taken place within him, of a nature wholly unknown before, and for which he had no name. He sat down upon the ridge where he had been working full of ineffable delight. He praised God. His physical strength returned, and he could bound like a roe. He had felt a sudden transision from darkness to light, from guilt and oppressive fear to confidence and peace. He could now draw nigh to God with more confidence than he could to his earthly father ; he

had freedom of access and freedom of speech. He was like a person who had got into a new world, where, although every object was strange, yet each was pleasing; and now he could magnify God for his creation, a thing he never could do before. O, what a change was here! and yet, lest he should be overwhelmed with it, its name and its nature were in a great measure hidden from his eyes."

The preacher coming to his father's house soon after, Adam related these circumstances to him, when,

"The man of God took off his hat, and with tears flowing down his cheeks gave thanks to God. 'O, Adam,' said he, 'I rejoice in this. I have been in daily expectation that God would shine upon your soul, and bless you with the adoption of his children.' Adam stared at him and said within himself, 'O, he thinks, surely that I am justified, that God has forgiven my sins, that I am now his child. And blessed be God! I believe I feel I am justified through the redemption that is in Jesus.' Now he clearly saw what God had done; and though he had felt the blessing before, and was happy in the possession of it, it was only now that he

could call it by its name. Now he saw and felt that 'being justified by faith, he had peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom he had received the atonement.' "—*Autobiography.*

The next Sabath he had a still more thrilling manifestation of the divine presence ; and thus he went on to the end of a long life, writing his elaborate commentary, and other books, preaching, defending the faith, and rejoicing in the hope of eternal life.

Let it be borne in mind that this young man was not trained to hear much of the religion which he experienced, and could not have learned it from others. Also, that he became one of the most learned men of his age,—the master of *thirty* languages, and lived long enough to detect his mistake in believing his experience to be the work of God upon his heart, and renounce it, if it had not been a divine reality. And furthermore, that that experience was a stronger confirmation to him of the being of a personal, living God, who hears and answers prayer,—the truth of the holy Scriptures, and the saving power of religion, than all the arguments he ever received from

other sources. It even improved his intellectual powers. He often declared, "After I found the peace of God, I may safely assert that I learned more in one day than I could formerly in a month. And no wonder; my soul began to rise out of the ruins of its fall, by the favor of the Eternal Spirit. I found that religion was the gate to true learning, and that they who went through their studies without it had double work to do."

As regards his future experience we cannot furnish many particulars, since he kept no diary. The reason he gave for this is, that "the experience of all religious people is nearly alike; in the main, entirely so. When you have read the journal of one pious man of common sense, you have read a thousand. After the first, it is only a change of names, times and places; all the rest is alike."

But his biographer says: "Dr. Clarke's religious experience was the work of God's Holy Spirit in the soul; begun, continued and perfected. . . . He sought and found what every man is obligated to find—the clear knowledge of pardon, and of adoption to be a child of God; and the

witness of his acceptance in the Beloved was never removed from his soul."

In addition to this, we have his own testimony in a letter to Mr. Wesley, concerning entire sanctification. Becoming acquainted with a local preacher in 1782, who claimed to enjoy it, he says: "I received some encouragement and direction to set out in quest of it, endeavoring with all my strength to believe in the ability and willingness of my God to accomplish the great work. Soon after this, while earnestly conversing with the Lord in prayer, and endeavoring self-desperately to believe, I found a change wrought in my soul, which I endeavored through grace to maintain through grievous temptations, and accusations of the subtle foe, who seemed now determined either to spoil me of my confidence, or to render me as miserable, through reiterated temptations, as I was before when mourning the inbeing of his infernal offspring. . . . But to this day (two years later) I am in doubt respecting the work in my own soul, not being able with propriety either to affirm that it is (fully) done, or to deny it as undone. I am in a strait betwixt two; a fear of denying, lest thereby I should

forfeit what I have received, or grieve the blessed Spirit; and again, a fear of affirming that it is done, lest I should deceive myself."

Dr. Clarke's biographer, Mr. Etheridge, adds, "These sanctifying graces were evidently strengthened in the latter part of his residence in the Norman Isles, . . . diffusing their effectual influence on his life. . . . I heard him preach a sermon only a few months before he ceased to be among us, in which, after reminding us that there can be no true happiness for man but in the enjoyment of the favor of God, he went on to prove that such felicity must be impossible without a testimony from God to the conscience that he adopts the pardoned sinner to be his child; and that this evidence is not to be inferred merely from texts of Scripture, however rightly applied, but ascertained from an interior oracle of the Holy Ghost, creating peace in believing, and inspiring the dispositions by which we say in life and word, '*Abba, Father!*' This is what I wish you not to rest without. Do not face death without it; *do not.* How awful to appear before the living God, if you have not the testimony in your own souls that you are born of him."

That this is a genuine Christian experience no candid reader can well question. While it furnishes strong confirmation of our theory of pardon, the new birth, the witness of the Spirit, and the unspeakable power, and joy which accompany them, does it not suggest *charity* toward those who differ in opinion with regard to entire sanctification? Here is a great humble man, at the feet of Jesus, consciously happy in the assurance of his adoption into the divine family, seeking entire cleansing, which he fails to find to his own satisfaction. He was greatly blessed indeed, and so are all devout people at times under similar, and other circumstances. If he was not entirely sanctified, why not? His whole soul went out after it, and he exhausted every resource to obtain it. Might he not have underestimated the work that was accomplished in his conversion? He came to God then to be saved from his sins, and claimed to have succeeded, and rejoiced with joy unspeakable. He believed, and no one can reasonably doubt that God *forgave all* his sins. If he did not sanctify him wholly, why not? He was completely subdued, and anxious to be saved from all sin. And when

the blessing came, he *felt* that he was saved in such a sense as to constitute him an heir of heaven. If that was not so, what was the reason? If God is indisposed to save sinners from *all* their sins when he pardons them, why may he not for the same reason postpone the work till death, as some claim that he does? If he saved young Clarke from all sins in connection with his justification, then in his subsequent efforts after sanctification he was only seeking in fact what he already possessed under another name.

I do not assume that this was his case, much less that it is the case of ordinary converts. But here was a remarkable man, remarkable for his intelligence,—the deepness of his convictions,—the completeness and earnestness of his *consecration*, the fervency of his prayers, and the clearness of his conversion. If God still left him in some sin, it seems strange that when the young man sought several years after to have it entirely removed, that he did not make an end of it, and assure him of the fact, as he seems not to have done. We believe many are fully sanctified, who do not claim to be, because they attribute to this grace qual-

ities or surrounding circumstances which are not necessary to it, and then pronounce themselves wanting because these contingencies do not appear in their experience. But whatever may be true with regard to this particular, the transformation in this young farmer was radical and profound. It opened up a new world to him, and laid the foundation of all that he achieved in after life. It shows just what God proposes to do for those who seek him with their whole heart, and the folly of teachers who represent conversion to be a mere resolve to lead a religious life. Many seekers have been spoiled for spiritual life and usefulness, by professing to be born again without the clear witness of the Spirit.

REV. JABEZ BUNTING, D.D.

We have here a man who was born of pious parents in 1779, and was brought up in the most religious manner, attending the meetings of his (Methodist) church, and seeming to be interested in everything that was good. He had no vices whatever. He believed in God and the truth of the gospel as he was taught from Sabbath to Sabbath. Conversion, to human

apprehension, hardly seemed necessary in his case.

But after he was well on in his "teens," he was about to attend a love-feast with his mother, where he had always been welcome, but was not allowed by the new pastor (Mr. Mather), to enter, because "he did not belong to the society." This led his anxious mother to say, "I do not know what you think of it, Jabez, but to me it seems an awful thing, that, after having been carried there you should now be excluded by your own fault." *She* went up to the feast, but he to his closet, to think and pray ;—and there renounced his sins, whatever they might be, more or less, and consecrated himself to God forever. The blessing, however, did not come then, but soon after. While standing at the door of his home in meditation and prayer, he was enabled to venture all on Christ, and was consciously pardoned and accepted. Later in life he remarked, "Many attribute their conversion to having attended a love-feast, but I owe mine to having been shut out of one. . . . You see I have to thank God for Methodist *discipline*, as well as Methodist doctrine."

This was the beginning of a great character.

Mr. Bunting soon joined the society, and commenced speaking a little in public. Sometime after, he was licensed to preach, and became one of the most (if not *the* most) influential preachers and managers in the Wesleyan Connection, and in the City of London, where he spent *thirty-three* years of his long and remarkable life.—*Stevens*'s *History, vol.* 3, *p.* 162.

This may seem to some as rather a superficial experience, and it was, so far as agony and protracted seeking are concerned, but it had in it all the elements of effectiveness. It embraced conviction enough to lead to the abandonment of sin, and the adoption of all righteousness, with humble trust in the mercy of God, and the atonement of Christ, and nothing more is necessary. The chief source of the trouble which many experience in becoming Christians, arises from their unwillingness to comply with the terms prescribed. They want to be saved without the surrender of their *idols*, and without openly confessing Christ and subjecting themselves to the reproach of his enemies. Not a few strangely think that they need to suffer much to make God willing to save them ; and when they have reached the point where they

think his anger ought to be appeased, they assume a delusive peace, though God has not spoken peace. When will we ever learn that salvation is the gift of God, and not the purchase of our doings or sufferings?

"Not all our groans and tears,
Nor works which we have done,
Nor vows, nor promises, nor prayers,
Can e'er for sin atone.

Relief alone is found
In Jesus's precious blood;
'Tis this that heals the mortal wound,
And reconciles to God."

REV. FRANCIS ASBURY,

one of the first bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church (who did more to lay its broad foundations than any other man), was English born,—an amiable, pleasant youth, honest, truthful, and so free from the vices of his age that he seemed to need little modification. But receiving a favorable account of the Methodists, he went to one of their meetings, and was pleased with their strange way of doing things. He says, "I had no deep convictions. At one sermon, some time after, my companion was powerfully wrought on; I was exceedingly grieved that I could not weep like him; yet I

knew myself to be in a state of unbelief. On a certain time when we were praying in my father's barn, I believe the Lord pardoned my sins and justified my soul."

With this experience, he immediately commenced holding meetings, trusting the Lord for everything he needed. That he was not deceived with regard to his conversion, may be inferred from his whole subsequent life. Approaching the American shore, he says, "I felt my mind opened to the people, and my tongue loosed to speak. I feel that God is here." A little later he says, "I find my mind drawn heavenward. The Lord hath helped me by his power, and my soul is in paradise." Further on he wrote, "My own mind is fixed on God. Glory be to him that liveth and abideth forever." Though overwhelmed with labors and cares, he lived in spiritual delights, showing the power of religion to support and comfort in all emergencies.

He was a model bishop. If all our preachers were to be thus filled with the Spirit, what would be the effect? Nothing can supply its place. No, NOTHING! Yet there was no struggle, no painful agony in this case, in obtaining

it. This young man just believed and was saved. And walking by faith in the way of duty, was saved to the end of a long life.

CHAPTER IX.

AMERICAN WITNESSES SUMMONED.

OUR witnesses, thus far, have been of foreign birth and education. The religion to which they testify, was providentially revived in this country a little more than a century ago, since which, many have been born of the Spirit, and furnish ample evidence to the point of our argument. We, therefore, bring forward a few, whose intelligence and integrity are unquestionable, beginning with one of the noblest of men.

ELIJAH HEDDING, D.D.,

was born in Dutchess county, N. Y., June 7, 1780, and died at Poughkeepsie, N. Y., April 9, 1852. Neither of his parents were professors of religion at the time of his awakening. His mother, however, being religiously inclined, took

much pains to train him up in the truths of the gospel, and incite him to that beautiful character which he afterward presented. He was early the subject of serious convictions, and often prayed, but removing to Vermont at eleven years of age, he was exceedingly harassed with infidel opinons, which, however, he was enabled to conquer. He says :—

"Notwithstanding my temptations to embrace these errors, I believed I might be saved, if I would turn to God, but my love of sin was so strong, I would not give up my idols. Occasionally I had a faint hope that I might repent and obtain mercy on a dying bed ; yet much of the time I was under a painful apprehension that I should be lost. I often *wished* that there was no God, or that he was such a God as would allow me to live in my sins and not send me to hell. I often wished that I could be annihilated, or I would have been glad to be turned into a brute, that I might be free from the liability of punishment in another world. But notwithstanding such vain wishes, the fearful conviction remained, that I had an immortal nature, and a sinful heart, and that my sins must be forgiven by the redeeming grace of

Christ, or I could never be happy in another world."

Yet, for all these convictions (which are only the common experience of sinners, showing how the Spirit strives with them), he continued in sin, but not without reading many religious books, and even occasional sermons to a little congregation gathered in the neighborhood. This he did at the request of Dr. Bushnell's grandmother, a devout Methodist, who started Sabbath service in her own house, and enlisted her husband to pray. In 1798, a remarkable revival of religion swept through the region of country where he lived, bringing the most abandoned characters, cavilers, Deists, blaspheming Athiests, and brawling Universalists to Christ. But nothing moved young Hedding for the first six months. But one Sabbath, after reading a most impressive sermon, selected by the good woman before named, because of its special adaptation to his case, she requested him to remain a few minutes after the people had gone, and inquired of him, "Do you know, my dear young friend, that you have God's call upon you to be a Methodist preacher?" "No," he answered promptly, "I am not even a

Christian. How can I be called to be a preacher?" "No matter for that," she replied, "you are called to be a Christian and a preacher,—and one for the sake of the other, even as Paul was! I think I say this by direction. And now let me request of you, on your way home, to go aside from the path into some quiet place in the woods, where you will not be interrupted, and there let this matter be settled before God, and he will help you."—*Zion's Herald, July* 15, 1880.

This was a word in season. He did as advised, and kneeling down by a large tree, he covenanted with God to cease from his follies and sins,—to part with all his idols, and to devote himself sincerely and earnestly, at every cost, to the great work of his soul's salvation. Over fifty years afterward he said to his biographer :—

"In that hour I solemnly made a dedication of myself to God. I laid my all,—soul, body, goods, and all—for time and eternity, upon the altar, and I have never, *never* taken them back. This was the first time in my life that I remember to have had the full consent of my will to part with all my sins for Christ's sake. My associates, hitherto, had been chiefly those who

were fond of pleasure and mirth, and in their amusements I took special delight. Several times before, I seemed willing to give up every thing except those social pleasures, but never until now, while kneeling in the grove, had this great idol of my heart been surrendered."—*Life and Times, p.* 65.

Such a consecration is generally expected to bring immediate relief, but experience shows that it does not always. Why not, no one can tell. The devil seems especially reluctant to lose his hold on some people. The disciples were quite defeated in one case, and when the sufferer was coming to Jesus, "the devil threw him down, and tare him." Young Hedding went home a penitent in darkness. But soon after, on hearing an impressive sermon, he was seized with unutterable anguish. He says:—

"I was so overwhelmed, I could not refrain from crying aloud. I could not breathe without an expression of anguish. Though I had long prided myself on being perfectly fortified against childish feelings and tears, yet for six weeks I could not bear religious conversation or prayer, nor could I read the Bible, or any religious book, without being melted into tender-

ness, and pouring out a flood of tears." But at the end of that time, while the preacher and others were praying, the burden of guilt was removed, his conscience was at rest, and peace and joy sprung up in his soul. That very day he became a probationer in the Methodist Episcopal Church, though not fully satisfied that he had reached the acme of possibility. What followed is best stated in his own words, thus :—

"About six weeks after the time when I felt the burden of guilt removed, during a conversation with Mr. Mitchell (the preacher) on the witness of the Spirit, the light of the Spirit broke in upon my mind, as clear and perceptible to me as the shining of the sun when it comes from behind a cloud, testifying that I was *born of God.* Then my heart was filled with joy, and my mouth with praise.

'Jesus all the day long was my joy and my song.'

"For several weeks after this, not a doubt, nor a fear, nor a moment's uncertainty clouded my spirit. . . . It seemed as if the old adversary himself was chained, and my whole soul was love, and my whole time was employed in prayer and praise."

About this time he attempted to learn arithmetic, but, he says, "My mind while under conviction, and after my conversion, and especially when I had received the witness of the Spirit, was so carried away by the all-absorbing power of divine grace, that I could give no attention to it, but was wholly engaged in studying the Bible, learning religious hymns, and in the exercise of devotion. I, who used to be sorry that I had a soul, and regret that I had been born into the world, continually rejoiced that I had been born to be born again."

This was the change that confirmed young Hedding in the truths of religion, which he believed with many doubts before, and made him the mighty man that he was in the pastorate and episcopacy of the church for more than fifty years. Nature, and the rough training of a new country, made him a *strong* man,—converting grace, under the tuition of a pious woman and an experienced pastor, made him a *holy* and a *happy* one. There are many others like him by birth and education, who live and die to no purpose, because they resist their convictions, and are not, therefore, "born again."

His dying experience is in full accord with

this delightful beginning, and proves the promise of Jesus, "Lo I am with you," to be equally true with that made to the weary sinner who comes to him,—"I will give you rest." A few of his dying utterances will show the reader this young man in his ending, in connection with his early experience. A little before his triumphant death, he said to a few friends :—

"I had labored fifty years and one month in the itinerancy, before I was broken down. I have come short in many things ; but I have labored sincerely and earnestly. I have suffered many privations, and endured many trials, but after all, if I had a hundred lives, I would be willing to spend them all in the same way,—believing, as I do, that God called me to the work. Blessed be God ! I have seen many a wanderer reclaimed and brought back to him ; I have seen many a sinner awakened and led to Christ for salvation ; and many, many men and women have I attended upon dying beds, who with their last breath, shouted, 'Glory to God ! I am washed and made clean in the atoning blood of the Lamb !' The recollection of these things comforts me now. I look back upon them with more pleasure than crowns and king-

doms, or than all the riches and honors of the world could ever have given. . . . My time of labor is now past, and I am going to my rest. . . . All my dependence is in the atonement. If I had to depend on the covenant of works, or on my own faithfulness, I should come short, but I depend alone on Christ, and I feel that he accepts me. I have no doubt of it. *I am as conscious of it as I can possibly be of anything.* . . . I need help from heaven every moment, and I have it ; I *feel* that I have it, and this is my support. I sometimes wonder how such a poor wretch, taken out of the mire of pollution and sin, can ever be made pure and fitted to dwell with God and Christ, and all the holy beings of heaven forever ! *I could not believe it,* if the glorious truths of the gospel were not so wonderfully supported by *astonishing* evidence."

A few days later, referring to a severe attack which he had fifteen months before, he said :—

"With the stroke, God gave me wonderful grace ; and it has been with me ever since. Not a day, not an hour, not a moment, have I had any doubt, or tormenting fear of death. I have been, at times, so that it was doubtful

whether I would live five minutes; but all was bright and glorious. I have not had joy all the time; but great support and comfort. But to-day I have been *wonderfully blessed.* . . . I have served God more than fifty years, and have generally had peace; but *I never saw such glory before—such light, such clearness, such beauty!* O, I want to tell it to all the world! O, had I a trumpet voice,

> 'Then would I tell to sinners round
> What a *dear* Saviour I have found.'

. . . . But I cannot. I never shall preach again, —never shall go over the mountains and through the valleys, the woods and the swamps, to tell of Jesus any more. But O, what glory I feel! it shines and burns all through me; it came upon me like the rushing of a mighty wind, as on the day of Pentecost."

Up to the last moment of his earthly existence, he was calm and serene.

To see the full import and unspeakable value of such a religion, we need to compare it with that of the impenitent and unbelieving world, and the stupidity of formalism. Since the ascension of Bishop Hedding, other prelates have gone, but not on his wings. You heard

no such notes of triumph from the Vatican when the holy father, so called, departed this life. He could not tell with any confidence where he was going, and his followers were so doubtful as to his condition after he had gone, that the Roman world was summoned to masses, prayers, fastings, and liberal contributions, for the "repose of his soul."

I knew Bishop Hedding for more than twenty years, and was with him in some of the most perplexing circumstances of his long and laborious life, and always found him in perfect harmony with the testimony above given. He was modest in his professions of personal piety, but always genial, sweet, and charitable. He never quenched the smoking flax in the weakest of God's children, but ever sought to raise it to a flame. He was, indeed, a model of practical holiness, and compelled most who differed with him in opinion, "to be at peace with him."

REV. WILLIAM P. ABBOTT, D.D.

This distinguished preacher finished a brilliant career of ministerial service in the city of New York, Dec. 22, 1878. His funeral services

have just been solemnized in the presence of a crowded assembly. The story of his experience as given by his eulogist on the occasion, is as follows, beginning at the age of twenty-one :—

"He was very fond of society, and being remarkably genial and companionable, as also attractive in person, he became a great favorite with the gay and worldly young people of the community in which he lived. With such associations and such impulses, he was an object of intense anxiety on the part of his friends. He seemed to them, and indeed to all who knew him, to be rapidly rushing on to a dissolute course. Remonstrance had no influence upon him. His will, his passions, his purposes, were all strong, and all drifting him in a wrong direction.

"At this crisis in his history the mercy of God was specially revealed toward him. He was, indeed, as he himself said, '*a brand plucked from the burning.*'

"He attended a camp-meeting near Pittston in the summer of 1859, careless and unconcerned, not seeking or desiring any religious benefit. But while there he was powerfully awakened. His condition was reported to Rev. Wm. Wyatt,

who tried to persuade him to surrender himself to gracious influences, but William refused, and returned home carrying his burden. He tried to drown his convictions in revelry and mirth, but they grew more intense. The nail was fastened by the Master of assemblies in a sure place. He subsequently attended another camp-meeting under the superintendence of Rev. Wm. Wyatt, this time as a sincere seeker of religion, and after two days earnest struggle, the light dawned upon him, and he was filled with holy joy. He began at once to testify for the divine Master.

"The change was so great, so sudden, so unexpected, that many doubted the reality of the work. But Brother Wyatt, who led him to the Saviour, who nursed him through his sin-sickness, who has ever since been a father to him, and in reference to whom our departed brother, the day before his death, said, '*I owe everything to him*,' Brother Wyatt believed in him. He said to several persons, 'That young man will surely be a preacher, and a good one too.' Young Abbott returned home thoroughly changed in heart and life. His conversion was marked, and shone like a beacon-light on all his

after pathway. He found no comfort in his accustomed avocations, however. He felt called to preach the gospel, but he also felt utterly disqualified for the work. In deep distress he went to Brother Wyatt and opened his heart, saying in his agony, '*What shall I do?*' 'Do? why you must preach!' said this wise master in Israel. 'But I cannot preach,' was the ready and sorrowful response. 'Yes you can, and must,' continued Brother Wyatt, who selected a text, and insisted that Brother Abbott should proceed at once to prepare a sermon. The work was done, and the sermon was preached soon after in a neighboring schoolhouse. Thus he commenced his life-work immediately after his conversion, and received a license as soon as he became a member of the Church."—*Christian Advocate, Jan.* 2, 1879.

How wonderful the change! Who but God could produce it? It was so marvellous, some of the preachers, like Ananias in regard to Paul, could hardly believe it real, but found it to be a genuine work.

D. L. MOODY.

This remarkable lay evangelist is so well

known that we hardly need to introduce him. His youth was characterized by something like recklessness. "If any one offended his sense of honor, he would fly into a fury at once; but the tempest of passion soon passed away."

At the age of eighteen he went to Boston and entered the store with his uncles, agreeing to attend the Mount Vernon Congregational Church, which he did, "caring little for what was said or sung." He says, "When I first went to Boston my employers made me go to church. I used to go and sit in the gallery, and very often fell asleep. One day while I was having a nap under the sermon, I felt somebody poking me in the ribs, and when I looked up there was one of the deacons, who had come to wake me, and was pointing with his finger at the minister, as much as to say, 'Attend to the preaching.' I felt as if everybody in the church was looking at me; but I did not know what else to do, unless I gave attention to the sermon, so I began to listen to Dr. Kirk, and for the first time in my life felt as if he were preaching altogether to me."

Soon after this his heart began to soften, and his Sunday-school teacher advised him to seek

the Lord, which he endeavored to do without much light. His success was not so striking as seekers are authorized to expect. "There was no such sudden and complete transformation in his outward life as is wrought by saving grace; but he had evidently changed his direction, or, as he would say, had been converted, and so sturdily did he resist the devil, and so hopefully did he get up and go on again whenever that enemy managed to trip him, that a few of his friends ventured to indulge a hope that he was one of the elect, though there were still a good many traces of the old Adam in him."

We are not sure that he has ever written his experience. He has steadily refused to publish his life, though often requested to do so. In this connection, he says:—

"Some time ago God gave me a great blessing, and after that I felt as if I must walk very softly, or else I should lose it. Of myself, I felt that I amounted to nothing, and it seemed to me that I must keep myself out of sight." On another occasion he said, "I used to have a terrible habit of swearing. Whenever I would get mad, out would come the oaths; but after I gave my heart to Christ, he took the

swearing all away, so that I did not have the least disposition to take God's name in vain. . . . When I first became a Christian, I tried to join the church, but they wouldn't have me, because they did not believe that I was really converted." Nearly a year after, 1856, he was received, but gave no particular sign of the great things before him. On the contrary, the few efforts at public speaking which he made, gave offence, and measures were take to silence him. But he soon removed to Chicago, Ill., where he attempted to let his light shine in the Plymouth church, which he joined, but was advised to leave the speaking and praying in meeting to those who could do it better.—*Moody, His Words, etc.*

This is about all we are authorized to say of this famous man's early experience. It is not very brilliant, but after all, it indicates a radical transformation. "His heart began to soften," says his friend. That was a great change for one so reckless. Besides, he "changed his *direction*." That means little with impulsive, vacillating souls, but with the sturdy, inflexible Moody it meant full consecration to God. Not if encouraged by the church, but whatever

might betide him. Too many *promise* well, but really keep on in the old way. Moody *turned* squarely round. Ceasing to do evil, he began to do well.

The religious life of many is brighest at its beginning. Others commence with little encouragement, but grow to be strong by perseverence. At the outset they seem not to attract the divine attention at all, but afterwards bear it said, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt." They are not of them "who draw back unto perdition ; but of them that believe to the saving of their souls."

DANIEL SAFFORD

made his mark upon the world, and has left his footprints behind him in a volume written by his wife, and published by the American Tract Society. He was a noble man. We knew him well, and advise all young men to read his life, and imitate his example. His conversion is stated in few words as follows :—

"One night, at a late hour, after having been in the company of some irreligious young men in Boston, the conviction came home to his reason and conscience, that he must im-

mediately separate from them or be ruined. Their scorn and ridicule were anticipated, and the question of bearing these, or the wrath of God, was well weighed. Before he went to sleep the momentous choice was made. Not more decided was Bunyan's Pilgrim, when with his fingers in his ears, he fled from the city of Destruction, crying, 'Life, life! eternal life!' To that decisive hour he always looked back with the most solemn interest, regarding it as the moment of his existence when his destiny was happily settled for this world and the next."

"About that time," he says, in a letter to his eldest son, "my attention was called to the subject of my own salvation. I then spent my evenings in reading the Bible and other good books, and attending religious meetings. My interest in religion gradually increased. I became more and more convinced of my lost condition as a sinner against God, and my need of such a Saviour as the gospel provides. Although the struggle was great and my progress slow, I trust I was ultimately led by the Spirit of God, whose aid I daily implored, to commit my soul unreservedly to him. I now

found new associates,—a few young men, with whom I met weekly for prayer and religious conversation. . . .

"Of these last friends, the one with whom I was most intimate, died in the triumphs of faith, while preparing for the ministry. Another became a wealthy merchant, and, after a life of usefulness, died about a year ago, leaving a large amount of property to different benevolent institutions. Two others have been faithful and successful ministers of the gospel, and one is still living and laboring in the vineyard. Very different is the history of my three earlier associates. Not long after I left them, one of them pilfered from his master, ran away, and, so far as I know, has not been heard from since. The other two sank lower and lower in vice and dissipation, until they lost their employment and friends, and became poor and shabby in their appearance. . . . I think they both died from the effects of their dissipation before they arrived at the age of thirty-five years. How true that 'the way of transgressors is hard,' and that 'the path of the just, like the shining light, shineth more and more unto the perfect day!'

"For a long time," he added, "my hope that I was a Christian was feeble and vacillating, so that I did not offer myself to the church until I was about nineteen years old."

This experience was not showy, but full of sincere renunciation of the world and consecration to God, and led to one of the most successful lives, temporally and spiritually, with which we have been acquainted. Mr. Safford was a member of different Congregational churches in Boston, changing his church connection as he was solicited and saw opportunity to be more useful with his religious efforts and money. His conversion led him to great industry and economy, and brought him wealth and honor obtained by few.

Mr. Safford's experience is a standing rebuke to many who are waiting for an *opportunity*. He saw his danger in associating with dissipated young men, and waited for nothing; but went to his room alone, and committed himself to God forever. Had he postponed for the coming of a revivalist, the opening of special religious services, or until he should get established in business, the result would have been different. But he sought first the

kingdom of God and his righteousness, by abandoning his wicked associates, reading the Bible, praying,—going to church, and mingling with spiritual people,—doing the will of God in all things, so far as he knew it. If sinners would act thus, on receiving their first religious impressions, we should have conversions every day, and everywhere, because God does awaken many to a sense of their guilt and danger who stifle their conviction by delay, if not by outbreaking sins.

We next introduce a witness who was born in Groton, Vt., in 1836,—trained a Congregationalist,—converted at the age of twenty, prepared for college, and graduated at Amherst, Mass., in 1862. We refer to

REV. J. ORAMEL PECK, D.D.,

who is now a pastor in a Methodist Episcopal church in Brooklyn, N. Y. His conversion was a little remarkable in some respects. Relating it to his congregation in Springfield, Mass., a friend reported it in the "Daily Union" of that city, March 29, 1873, as follows:—

"On the 15th of September, 1856, I started

up the mountain side after the herd of cows. When about half way, a terrible thunder shower broke over the mountain and meadow. I took refuge in an old deserted house till the storm swept by. I was so high on the mountain that I could see the clouds lowering and the lightnings darting far below me. While standing on the door-sill and watching the fearful thunderbolts, the goodness of God in protecting and blessing me with all I enjoyed, came crashing like a thunderbolt through my soul. In a moment I noticed my ingratitude and disobedience. My past life, the future, God's claims, my present duty, swept before me like a panorama. I felt every nobler instinct and sentiment of my soul demanded of me to give myself to God's service from that hour. The contest between my duty and inclination was sharp but short. I dropped on my knees in prayer and made a consecration of myself to my heavenly Father. I prayed till my soul found peace and rest, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. When I arose the storm had ceased and the sun was shining. I was in a new world! I never saw such beauty and glory in the face of nature before! The retreat-

ing storm, the gorgeous rainbow, the trees dripping and glistening with pearls through which the sun flashed, every green blade tipped with diamond drops, formed one resplendent scene that thrilled my enraptured heart! From that hour new purposes swayed me; new pulses stirred within me; new and better thoughts awoke! I was lifted out of old ruts, started on a new course, and was driven toward a new destiny. I was not frightened by the fear of hell, but melted by the thought of the goodness of God. There was no religious interest in the town, and no human agency employed to lead me to salvation. It was all of God. By the grace of God alone I am what I am! To him belongs all the glory of saving me from a sinful life and a miserable future. Since that hour I have never doubted God's power and willingness to suddenly and soundly change and regenerate the penitent sinner."

Seldom do we find one converted with so little of human agency. Most have the impression or conviction described, but few yield to it so promptly. This case indicates the divine intention in awakening sinners when *alone* to think of their sins, and salvation; and what

would be the result were they to fall upon their knees and consecrate themselves to God. The long and tedious processes detailed in other cases are not necessary, where there is complete submission to the terms proposed. Had Mr. Peck relapsed soon after this event transpired, we should have questioned the soundness of his conversion. But having at once renounced all his early plans of life, and consecrated his whole being to the saving of men, we cannot doubt that it was a genuine work of the Holy Spirit. Reader, what is this to thee? If yet in sin, "go and do thou likewise."

MRS. MAGGIE N. VAN COTT

has become so well known to the public as a successful evangelist, many will be pleased to read something of the beginning of her religious life from her own pen. She was born in New York city, confirmed in the Protestant Episcopal Church at eleven years of age, married young, and lived in worldly business and pleasure.

"At last," she says, speaking of herself, "business growing dull, she had ample time for meditation, when calmly she asked herself,

'Does the world afford you a ray of joy? Are you happy in sin? Would you wish to die as you now live? What do you gain by sinning against God?' . . . These, and similar questions passed through her mind some five or six days, while her heart was indeed wretched enough.

"One morning while on her way to the office, crossing Fulton-street ferry, she heard plainly the voice of her Saviour saying, 'You must decide *to-day*.' '*Now* is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.' Why longer delay? With the crowd she passed unconsciously from the boat, and having some business in John street, walked slowly onward. Suddenly, as if awaking from a dream, with her heart trusting, praying, believing, she cried out, 'Lord, if thou wilt accept the sacrifice, I from this moment give thee my body and soul. I will be wholly thine, and, by thy grace, I will never turn back!' That moment she stood on the pavement in front of the old John-street Methodist Episcopal church, and from heaven light streamed in upon her soul. She was soundly, powerfully converted." Temptations soon came to which

she replied, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him. Yea, I will praise him; for he is my God. Glory be to his holy name."

With this outset she moved quietly along for some time, when she was induced to enter a class-meeting, which she had been taught to despise. She heard and saw the whole, but did not speak. While the leader, however, was addressing her a few kind words, she says, "A thrill of the most ecstatic joy ran through her entire nature—soul and body felt the touch of Jesus's love. Several moments ran past,—the happy soul, flooded with divine light, was glorifying the God of salvation."

This she calls "that *fullness* which God promised in these words, 'I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams!' She seemed perfectly emptied of self and filled with the Spirit of God. Here was the gift of that power which overcomes the world. From that hour she felt that her lips had been touched as if with a live coal from the altar of God. The breath of the Lord had blown the spark of divine grace into a great

flame. This was the beginning of her active Christian life. In the joy of the moment, the two worlds of grace and glory seemed blended together. . . . Again and again with her clear, strong voice, she shouted 'Glory to God in the highest!' . . . . The very place seemed to be the inside of that house above, which is full of glory."—*The Harvest and the Reaper, pp.* 64

Thus we see, that salvation is not confined to any one locality, education or sect; but is open to sinners of all nations and opinions, who will seek the Lord with all their heart. No one knows at the outset exactly what to do, or what to expect, much less does he understand the philosophy of the work. All are obliged to venture out on their strongest convictions, and trust God for the result. And, in this respect, religion does not differ very much from other pursuits. Waiting to fully comprehend the whole subject, is to abandon it. The blind man simply knew that he was blind, but he did not know Jesus. He, however, had heard of him, and of his mighty miracles, and thought that he might possibly give him sight. So he cried after him, followed instructions, and saw

clearly. In like manner the blind sinner, full of prejudice and unbelief, following such light as he can obtain, is led to know God and his word better than he knows himself.

CHAPTER X.

THE TRIUMPHS OF GRACE IN NORTHAMPTON, MASS., AND NEW JERSEY.

ABOUT the time the Wesleys and Mr. Whitefield were emerging into public life in the Church of England (1735), a remarkable revival of religion occurred in America among Christians of other sects and forms, revealing the power of grace and the truth of the Bible. Rev. Jonathan Edwards, an eminent Congregational minister of Northampton, acted an important part in the work. Before calling other witnesses, we deem it advisable to present a summary of his report of this work, found in a valuable book entitled, "*Edwards on Revivals.*" He says :—

"Persons are first awakened with a sense of

their miserable condition by nature, the danger they are in of perishing eternally, and that it is of great importance to them that they speedily escape and get into a better state. . . . Some are more suddenly seized with convictions ; it may be by the news of others' conversion, or something they hear in public or in private conference, their consciences are suddenly smitten, as if their hearts were pierced through with a dart : others have awakenings that come upon them more gradually ; they begin at first to be more thoughtful and considerate, so as to come to a conclusion in their minds that it is their best and wisest way to delay no longer, but to improve the present opportunity. . . . Others that, before this wonderful time, had been something religious and concerned for their salvation, have been awakened in a new manner, and made sensible that their slack and dull way of seeking was never likely to attain their purpose, and so have been roused up to greater violence for the kingdom of heaven.

" These awakenings have had two effects : one was that they have brought their subjects immediately to quit their sinful practices. . . . And the other effect was, that it put them on

earnest application to the means of salvation, reading, prayer, meditation, the ordinances of God's house, and private conference ; their cry was, '*What shall we do to be saved?*'

"There is a very great variety as to the degree of fear and trouble that persons are exercised with, before they attain any comfortable evidence of pardon and acceptance with God . . . Some have ten times less trouble of mind than others, in whom the issue seems to be the same.

"The awful apprehensions persons have had of their misery, have, for the most part, been increasing, the nearer they have approached to deliverance, though they often pass through many changes in the frame and circumstances of their minds; sometimes they think themselves wholly senseless, and fear that the Spirit of God has left them, and that they are given up to judicial hardness. . . .

"Together with these fears, and that exercise of mind which is rational, and which they have just ground for, they have often suffered many needless distresses of thought, in which Satan probably has a great hand to entangle them and block up their way. . . .

"Many times persons under great awakenings were concerned because they thought they were *not* awakened, but miserable, hard-hearted, senseless creatures still, and sleeping upon the brink of hell.

"Persons are sometimes brought to the borders of despair, and it looks as black as midnight to them a little before the day dawns in their souls. . . . Many in such circumstances have felt a great spirit of envy towards the godly, especially towards those that are thought to have been lately converted. . . . Indeed some have felt many heart-risings against God, and murmurings at his way of dealing with mankind, and his dealings with themselves in particular. . . .

"As they are gradually more and more convinced of the corruption and wickedness of their hearts, they seem to themselves to grow worse and worse, harder and harder, and more desperately wicked, instead of growing better, ... and ofttimes never think themselves so far off from good, as when they are nearest. . . . They often think that they differ from all others; and their hearts are ready to sink with the thought, that they are the worst of all, and that none

ever obtained mercy who were so wicked as they.

"Very often, under first awakenings, when they are brought to reflect on the sin of their past lives, and have something of a terrifying sense of God's anger, they set themselves to walk more strictly, and confess their sins, and perform many religious duties, with a secret hope of appeasing God's anger and making up for the sins they have committed.

"But when they reflect on these wicked workings of heart against God, if their convictions are continued, they sometimes have great fears that they have committed the unpardonable sin, and that God will surely never show mercy to them. But then, perhaps, by something they read or hear of the infinite mercy of God, and the all-sufficiency of Christ for the chief of sinners, they have some encouragement and hope renewed; but think that as yet they are not fit to come to Christ,—that they are so wicked that Christ will not accept of them; and then, it may be, they set themselves upon a new course of fruitless endeavors in their own strength to make themselves better.

"There have been some who have not had

great terrors, but have had a very quick work. . . . God has appeared far from limiting himself to any certain method in his proceedings with sinners under legal convictions. . . . His footsteps cannot always be traced, and his ways are past finding out. . . . There is in nothing a greater difference, in different persons, than with respect to the time of their being in distress; some but a few days, and others for months or years. There may be many in this town who first saw multitudes of others rejoicing, with songs of deliverance in their mouth, who had seemed wholly careless and at ease, and in pursuit of vanity, while they had been bowed down with solicitude about their souls; yea, some had lived licentiously, and so continued till a little before they were converted.

"The gracious discoveries, whence the first special *comforts* are derived, are in many respects various. More frequently Christ is distinctly made the object of the mind, in his all-sufficiency and willingness to save sinners. But some have their thoughts more especially fixed on God, in some of his sweet and glorious attributes. . . . Some think chiefly of the power of God, and others of the excellency of the way

of salvation by Christ, and the suitableness of it to their necessities.

"It appears very plainly in some of them, that before their own conversion, they had very *imperfect ideas of what conversion is:* it is all new and strange, and what there was no clear apprehension of before. They acknowledge that the expressions that were used to describe conversion, did not convey to their minds the distinct ideas which they were intended to signify; perhaps little more than the names of colors convey their meaning to one who is blind."

The *effect* of this great change is described thus:—

"Their joyful surprise has caused their hearts as it were to leap, so that they have been ready to break forth into laughter, tears often at the same time issuing like a flood, ... and sometimes they have not been able to forbear crying out with a loud voice, expressing their great admiration.

"There is no one thing that I know of that God has made such a means of promoting his work among us as the *news of others' conversion.* . . . Conversion is a great and glorious work of

God's power, at once changing the heart and infusing life into the dead soul. . . . In some, converting light is like a glorious brightness suddenly shining in upon a person and all around him. They are in a remarkable manner brought *out of darkness into marvellous light.* In others it has been like the dawning of the day, when at first but a little light appears, and it may be, is presently hid with a cloud ; and then it appears again and shines a little brighter, and gradually increases, with intervening darkness, till at length it breaks forth more clearly. . . . Those that while under legal convictions have had the greatest terrors, have not always obtained the greatest light and comfort ; nor have they always light most suddenly communicated ; but yet I think the *time of conversion* has been most *sensible* in such persons.

"The converting influences of God's Spirit very commonly bring an extraordinary conviction of the reality and *certainty* of the great things of religion ; they have a sight and taste of divinity, or divine excellency there is in the things of the gospel, that is more to convince them than reading many volumes of argument without it. It seems to me that in many

instances among us, they have been as far from doubting of the truth of them, as they are from doubting whether there be a sun when their eyes are open in the midst of a clear atmosphere, and the strong blaze of his light overcomes all objections against his being. . . . Some are thus convinced of the truth of the gospel in general, and that the Scriptures are the word of God. . . . The arguments are the same that they have heard hundreds of times, but the *force* of the arguments, and their conviction of them, is altogether new; they come with a new and before unexperienced power: before they *heard* it was so, and they allowed it to be so; but *now* they *see* it to be so indeed. Things *now* look exceedingly plain to them, and they wonder that they did not see them before.

"Many, while their minds have been filled with spiritual delights, have, as it were, forgotten their food; their bodily appetite has failed, while their minds have been entertained with meat to eat that others know not of. The light and comfort which some of them enjoy, gives a new relish to their common blessings, and causes all things about them to appear as

it were beautiful, sweet and pleasant to them: all things abroad, the sun, moon and stars, the clouds and sky, the heavens and earth, appear, as it were, with a cast of divine glory and sweetness upon them.

"The *joy* that many of them speak of as that to which none is to be paralleled,—is that which they find when they are *lowest in the dust*, emptied most of themselves, and, as it were, annihilating themselves before God;—when they are nothing and God is all;—when they see their own unworthiness, depending not at all on themselves, but alone on Christ, and ascribing all glory to God:—Then their souls are most in the enjoyment of satisfying rest. . . . Many express earnest desire of soul to praise God; . . . and they want to have others help them in praising him:—they want to have every one praise God, and are ready to call upon everything to praise him."

We have transcribed these marks of a great work of God, as a sort of preface to the individual experiences which are to follow. They will be profitable for inquirers, being calculated to correct many misapprehensions into which they are liable to fall. They show, too, the

unity of the work of the Spirit, whether in one country or denomination or another, despite differences in other particulars, as well as the convincing power of conversion with regard to Christianity and the Book which represents it.

This great work was among Calvinistic Congregationalists, whose methods are generally very quiet. There were no Methodists at that time in the country, and but few in the world. Yet this work was substantially the same as that of the day of Pentecost, and many others which have occurred since in different lands, and among peoples of different sentiments and formulas of worship, showing that it is not of man, or of human contrivance, but of God.

But we pass to consider a peculiar case which transpired in New Jersey in early times, namely, that of

REV. BENJAMIN ABBOTT.

In his later years he was a very effective evangelist. "His whole soul seemed pervaded by a certain magnetic power that thrilled his discourses and radiated from his person, drawing, melting, and frequently prostrating the stoutest opposers in his congregation."

He first appears to us an apprentice in Phil-

adelphia, where, he says, "I soon fell into bad company, and from that to card-playing, cock-fighting and many other evil practices." He afterward returned to New Jersey and was married. "All this time" (to forty years of age), he says, "I had no fear of God before my eyes, but lived in sin and open rebellion against God, in drinking, fighting, swearing, gambling, etc."

A hard candidate for the ministry! But God followed him by his Spirit, day and night. He was a remarkable dreamer. At length he went to hear a Methodist preacher, a great curiosity then in that country. "In a moment," he says, "all my sins that I ever had committed were brought to my view; I saw it was the mercy of God that I was out of hell, and promised to amend my life in the future. I went home under awful sensations of a future state; my convictions increased, and I began to read my Bible with attention, and saw things in a different light from what I had ever seen them before, and made many promises to God with tears and groans, to forsake sin; but I knew not the way to Christ for refuge, being

ignorant of the nature both of conviction and conversion."

In this state of mind he became despondent, and was tempted to commit suicide, but being restrained, he hastened to another Methodist meeting, where, he adds, the preacher's "word was attended with such power, that it ran through me from head to foot; I shook and trembled like Belshazzar, and felt that I should cry out if I did not leave the house, which I determined to do, that I might not expose myself among the people; but when I attempted to rise to go, I found that my strength had failed me, and the use of my limbs was so far gone, that I was utterly unable to rise. Immediately I cried aloud, '*Save, Lord, or I perish!*'"

The next day he went *ten* miles to another similar meeting to ask for advice, and get *baptized*, thinking *that* might relieve him, for he had no idea of justification by faith. "Are you a Quaker?" inquired the preacher. "No," said he, "I am nothing but a poor, wretched, condemned sinner." The preacher quoting the promises, he saw the point and exclaimed in faith, "Then I was the *very man* that Christ

died for, or he would not have awakened me. He came to seek and to save the greatest of sinners and commanded me to *believe*."

That night he had a strange dream, in which he saw the Saviour standing with outstretched arms, saying, "I *died for you*." "At that moment," he says, "the Scriptures were *wonderfully opened* to my understanding. My heart felt as light as a bird, being relieved of that load of guilt which had before bowed down my spirits, and my body felt as active as when I was eighteen, so that the outward and inner man were both animated. . . . While I was telling my neighbors my experience, and exhorting them to flee from the wrath to come, some laughed and others cried, and some thought I had gone distracted. Before night a report was spread all through the neighborhood that I was raving mad."

One minister thought he was under a "strong delusion of the devil," and tried to deliver him. Thinking it possible that it might be so, he says, "I went a little out of the road, and kneeled down and prayed to God if I was deceived, to undeceive me, and the Lord said to me, 'Why do you doubt? Is not Christ all-

sufficient? is he not able? Have you not felt his blood applied?' I then sprang upon my feet and cried out, 'Not all the devils in hell shall make me doubt'; for I *knew* that I was converted. At that instant I was filled with unspeakable raptures of joy."

This remarkable change occurred Oct. 11, 1772, after which he moved straight forward in the path of duty, growing in grace and achieving wonders for the glory of God and the salvation of men. August 14th, 1796, he died as he had lived, full of joyfulness, declaring, "Perfect love casteth out fear, and he that feareth is not made perfect in love." "For my part," he said, "I can call God to witness that death is no terror to me! I am ready to meet my God! Glory to God," he exclaimed; "I see heaven sweetly opened before me." Clapping his hands he shouted, "Glory! *Glory!* GLORY!" and fell asleep in Jesus.

Who but God could accomplish such a work, on such a subject? And what system of religion is there in the world that achieves such results, except that of Christianity? It never comes of idol worship, visiting shrines, or manipulating relics. Christianity alone *casts out*

devils, and saves the lost, and that only by the power of God, through faith in Jesus of Nazareth.

CHAPTER XI.

THE TESTIMONY OF AN INFIDEL LAWYER.

During a great revival of religion which occurred in New York, and, indeed, all over the country, in 1857 and the year following, many marvellous conversions transpired, several of which were soon after detailed in a most interesting book, written by Dr. Samuel Irenæus Prime, entitled, "*The Power of Prayer.*" The following is the substance of one of them :—

The subject of it was a lawyer, who was religiously educated, and early professed to be a Christian, but in his mature years departed from the faith and became an infidel. Being left alone one evening in his office,—a favorable condition for serious reflection,—he began to think of his situation, and, naturally enough, of the revival, reports of which filled the air. "What interest have I," he asked himself, "in

that ? I have examined the subject of religion, the Bible, the divinity of Christ, and I reject the whole ; it is not sustained by legitimate testimony ; it is all foolishness."

Still, he remembered his former religious experiences, and conceded the superior happiness of Christians, saying, "If there be no immortality, no judgment, no heaven, no hell, no eternal *life* for the good ; if all religious enjoyments end at death, the Christian's faith and hope are greatly to be preferred, as a means of present enjoyment."

Thus he sat soliloquizing, when a notice of a meeting in Greene-street Methodist Episcopal church attracted his attention, and drew him out, as follows :—

"Have a good mind to go—have not been in church for a long time—wonder if they will look cross ? . . . . Am *in* the church close by the door—hope I shall not intrude—will be very civil—they are singing, praying, singing, preaching ; prayer-meeting announced—shall I go home ? all invited to stay,—that does not mean me surely—stay though—leaders in the altar—singing—praying—anxious ones invited to come to the altar—if there are any in the

congregation who desire the prayers of Christians, let them manifest it by rising—a pause—nobody rises—wonder why the whole congregation does not rise—have a good mind to rise myself and rebuke them for their stupidity . . . . —ashamed of the poor sinners who would not stand up—singing, praying—several members walking through the aisle speaking to individuals—one comes where I am seated—'do you enjoy religion?'—It is pleasant to be here if I do not disturb any one. 'Are you a member of any church?'—Episcopal. 'We are glad to see you here; will you not take a seat further up? it will look so sociable.' If it will oblige you, I will go—went up—began to feel some interest in the proceedings—the Christians seemed to enjoy it. How much better they are employed here than they would have been in some *rowdy* meeting, as some of them doubtless would have been, had they not been here.

"Next evening was alone again—thought of the meeting, and determined to go. But asked, 'what for? The Bible is no revelation, Christ is no God, God is sovereign, and will do with me just as he pleases, in time and eternity. Why should I care? why fret about that which

I cannot help ? hell cannot be much worse than earth. I had nothing to do with bringing myself into the world ; if I had been consulted, I would not have come. At all events, when I get to hell, I shall get rid of one difficulty that torments men here—the fear of death.'"

This is the way of the natural heart under the strivings of the Spirit. But he says, "I will go to church again to-night—what will *they* say—I can never be renewed—I shall never again enjoy religious emotion—how can I ? I like to see others enjoy it.—There is my friend L——, his whole soul is wrapped up in it—he seems to enjoy it—he seems to be happy amidst trials and conflicts enough to drive a man crazy. . . . *I*, always miserable. I once did enjoy something of it. . . . How did I lose it ? (Let darkness—deep, black, lasting darkness cover the story of my declension.") . . . .

"In church again ; occupy the same seat—requested to seat myself nearer the altar—services as before—inquirers kneeling at the altar, the pastor by the side of one of them (a man advanced in years), on his knees in prayer. The Spirit of God is in that prayer ; it presented my case. God help me to take it to myself.

I was very mellow for a little season. Wondered how any person there should know my history on religious subjects. Went home unsatisfied; restless, sorry, glad, uneasy; thankful that I went to church. Reminiscences of former times crowded upon me ; those happier days when religion, feeble in it as I was, gave joy to my soul, which many years of subsequent established infidelity could not wholly obliterate ; those days, I shall enjoy them no more ! Others do and may continue to rejoice and glory in religious services ; they are not for me ; believe, I cannot ; hope, I may not ; how can I answer my own skepticism, my own infidel arguments, my own reading of the Bible ; I always believed in God ; *my* God, not the Christian's God ; what would S., and G., and M., and H., and B., and others say ? they who have so often complimented the conclusiveness of my infidel arguments, to hear me now attempt to refute them myself, and argue for Christianity ? No matter for them, what would Christ say ? How could I speak to him ? of him? Christians *now* are more happy than I ; the future world, alike to all, all nothing—nothing—nothing.

"Days passed, weeks passed; the subject was continually upon my mind. I came to that day, that night of agony—of agony unspeakable; how shall I speak of it? how write? I cannot; it must not be written. Well can I remember, but cannot speak, cannot write, can scarcely think again one tithe of *that* which came, pressed on, departed in quick succession from my mind. Was it a dream? As those days and weeks passed by, daily the meetings in Greene-street sanctuary were by me attended. Associates joked, ridiculed me for it. M., a new comer into our office, was a religious man; he had left those notices of meetings at Greene-street purposely for me (thus I learned). I was glad of it; thought I was not entirely abandoned to infidelity; this thought was strengthened by the members of the church, who, with kindness, several of them, expressed pleasure at seeing me in their meetings. Asked myself often if there was a possibility for me to become a Christian; no, it cannot be. B., my other office-associate, was, if possible, more infidel than myself. It was, perhaps, vanity in me that led me to see the weakness of his infidel arguments; thought I could present them much

more forcibly than could he. He, like myself, was a very wicked man. I could always refute him with the Christian's argument. I told M. that he ought to get B. converted, it would do him good, for he did not know enough to be an infidel; he did not understand the Scriptures well enough to maintain an infidel argument. M. replied, 'That is just what he says of you; he thinks it would be the best thing that could happen to you, to get religion.' I thought it was impossible for me, and told him so; but if B. would put himself in the way of religious services, he would soon be converted. I, attending the church, was often moved to distress, doubt, anxiety, despair. One evening, the pastor came to the door of the pew I occupied; I was the only person in it. 'Please, move along,' said he, 'and let me sit beside you.' I did so, and he sat beside me. 'I should like to know the state of your mind,' said he. I replied, 'I like to attend your meetings; hope I am not in the way of any person?'

"'Do you enjoy religion?'

"'No, not as I once did.'

"'Do you belong to any church?'

"'No—yes; I am an Episcopalian; was edu-

cated in that church, but for many years have seldom attended it ; am not now a Christian, and suppose I never shall be ; still, I like to be here ; it is a pleasure to me ; and if I do not intrude, shall continue to come.'

"'Come and welcome ; we are glad to see you here, and hope it will do your soul good.'

"'Thank you, sir.' Invited to go to the altar : inquirers were there ; had a mind to go, but did not. Meeting closed—went home—was alone in my room : old memories revived : distress : anguish : pray I cannot—try—no : it is of no use for me to try ; whatever joy there may be in religion for others, there is none for me. The Bible : it speaks not for me. Jesus Christ : he is repudiated, rejected, slain—yes, crucified, but not for me ; there was a time it might have been for me ; that time is passed ; now, it cannot be for me ; for me ? no, no, never ; sins of a lifetime : how long ? how many ? all concentrated—real, deep, dark, damning ! Oh ! memory ! my soul sinks under their crushing weight ! Sins : against myself, man, God—against God ; sins terrible in aggregate, more terrible in detail ; they enlarge, magnify all, all in a moment, nothing else but

sin—no, nothing, Oh, God! how they cluster around me! The room is dark—darker the gloom upon my soul; in bed—alone—asleep: there is none for me; agony, agony. Is it a dream that comes over me: reality? yes, reality. Jesus at a distance—Satan near (so it seemed); pray, pray; a voice seemed to say: try, try to pray; no! God appears: still at a distance stands the Saviour, his face fearfully solemn—no signs of anger in it. I think he would, but cannot save me; his countenance alters not. Satan suggests: there is no hope, no hope for me; I feel it—know it; my soul sinks in despair. I look at the Saviour: he seems to smile on me, and say, 'how foolish you are: I have saved others as bad as you. Doubt not my power: when you are in earnest, then look to me.' 'What, me?' 'Yes, you; my office is to save the worst. You have thought and said hard things of me, and now, in all your trouble, you look towards me, but do not trust me: you have not faith in my power to do you good.' Is it possible that I can be saved from this crushing load of sin? Thoughts innumerable, troublesome thoughts, press heavily upon my mind and memory;

hours pass—try to be penitent, to believe, to pray: cannot; exhausted—try to dispel these gloomy thoughts—will not go at my bidding. Why am I troubled in this way? it is all nonsense; I cannot be in my right mind—must be crazy; horrible thought! I will go to sleep—shall feel better in the morning; eyes closed—cannot sleep—get up and look out of the window; why, it is daylight, and I have not slept a wink all night. What shall I do? I am not sick; my pulse is quick, but not much quicker than usual. I will go to meeting to-night—yes, to the altar: how absurd! how foolish! Lie down again, mentally saying, Blessed Jesus, let me sleep; Satan, begone, I am resolved to go!

"Again awake—two hours have passed. Blessed Jesus, I thank thee; canst thou indeed save *me?* comforting thought, is it *possible?* Jesus, have mercy on me; Lord Jesus, have mercy on me, even me. Feel strangely, something no language can describe what it is; Jesus is near, Satan stands back; there is hope, faint, faint hope; get behind me, Satan: 'whosoever *will* let him come unto me.' I will, blessed Saviour, help me; am helped, I

feel it; will believe in Jesus, *my Saviour;* help me to say so, Jesus; Father in heaven, have mercy on my soul, for the sake of Jesus; Spirit of the living God, direct me, help me. Oh, help me, even *me.*

"The hour of business has arrived: I am unfit for it, am not happy, hope I shall be: afraid not; in doubt, and hope, and fear, the day passes to near its close. I will go to the meeting this evening, will not go to the altar, that is not necessary; will confess my sins to God, whilst they are praying; will they pray for me? they would not if they knew my moral position; if they only knew how bad I am, they would not have me in their house. I will give it all up: God knows just how bad I am; he has pardoned some very wicked men. . . . I will go to the altar, why should I hesitate, others have there been blessed, why may not I? They will pray for me, if they do not, God may forgive me; he has pardoned others —the thief upon the cross, denying, swearing Peter. . . . Friend L. is experienced in such matters—I will see him and tell him all; he knows me—all my circumstances; he will not believe a word I say—will think it pretence;

not a being of my acquaintance but would do the same. None of them will believe that I can repent and be saved; cannot blame them —would not believe it myself, of any one else in my circumstances; for myself, I only hope it may be possible. I will go and see L.: it will not do any good—he will say I am drunk or crazy; have drunk no liquor in months: he will scold me: I will see him, nevertheless—I want his advice.

"On the way to L.'s—wonder if he is at home—hope he will not be there; what will he say? I will turn back—wont make a fool of myself—these feelings will all be gone in a little while—shall then be ashamed I ever had them; turn back, turn round, people in the street will think me crazy—can't help it—God help me—words of prayer, do I mean them? try mentally to pray—enter L.'s room—none there but him:—how do you do? 'Why, C., what is the matter with you?' Don't know. 'Are these tears of penitence? it would rejoice my heart to think so.' No answer. 'Come, let us kneel down and pray.' He prayed, prayed for me. 'You pray for yourself.' 'God have mercy,' I heard my own voice say. I had

mercy—felt it—was relieved—told L. all my feelings and resolutions. 'You have resolved right—you just do it.' Did resolve and was happy; if tears were shed, they were grateful tears.

"On the way from L.'s to the church; will tell the brethren what the Lord has done for my soul, will thank them for their prayers and kindness, will acknowledge God my Saviour before them, and pray for divine assistance.

"In the church, sermon is ended—brethren in the altar—singing—sinners invited to come to the altar; I rise to speak; cannot utter a word; altar, altar, altar, seems to sound in my ears; start for it; kneel; they are singing—praying; the heavens are brass over me—no God—no Saviour—time passes—sounds are heard—they become faint—fainter—cease—consciousness is suspended; I feel a pricking sensation about my head, hands, feet—all over me—similar to that I once felt when restored to consciousness from apparent death; I hear music—'come to judgment'—a well-known voice in prayer (the voice of M.); 'Oh! my Saviour,' it says—I seemed to see the Saviour on my right side—Jesus smiling upon me, his

face radiant with love—my soul is filled with grateful joy—literally unspeakable and full of glory—standing up before the altar with my brethren as their shouts of thanksgiving ascend to heaven ; I am too full to utter anything but thanks to my brethren, thanks to my God and Saviour.

"As I look back upon that hour of agony and deliverance, with what thrilling emotions can I repeat the words of one of our hymns :

> "'Tongue can never express
> The sweet comfort and peace
> Of a soul in its earliest love.'

"From thence, hitherto I have, by God's grace, rejoiced with thankfulness in the blessed assurance of his willingness and ability to pardon and save to the uttermost all who come to him through Jesus Christ my Saviour.

> "'What I have felt and seen
> With confidence I tell,
> And publish to the sons of men
> The signs infallible.'

"I *know* that *my* Redeemer lives, for whose sake God has *pardoned* me, and I rejoice every day in believing that here and hereafter I shall be happy ; that it may be so, my constant

prayer to God shall ascend for grace and the aid of his Holy Spirit."

What a wonderful exhibition of poor fallen human nature is here! It reveals

1. The *misery* of sinners under the enlightening influence of the gospel, and the Spirit of God. Sin, however fortified by intelligence and infidelity, fails to satisfy its sincerest followers. This man claims to have been honest in his unbelief, but he was, nevertheless, tormented with the "*fear of death*," and what might follow it. Though his arguments convinced others, they did not satisfy himself. The review of his infidelity divulged no comfort that it had ever afforded him; but he remembered his youthful experience of faith and religion, as a *bright and happy* period in his history. This, we believe, is the common experience of all backsliders. They can say in moments of thoughtfulness:

> "What peaceful hours I once enjoyed!
> How sweet their mem'ry still!
> But they have left an aching void
> The world can never fill."

2. This experience also suggests one advantage of early conversions. Many are less active in getting children and youth converted, on ac-

count of their vacillation and liability to backslide. Yet they are zealous in teaching them the great truths of religion, in the hope that they will take root, and bring them to Christ in after years. But this case reveals an important fact in human experience, namely, that nothing,—no instructions, however orthodox and complete, so settle and ground people, young or old, in the Christian faith, as the demonstration given to it by the experience of the new birth. This man was brought up in the Episcopal Church, where the truths of the Bible were spread out before him from the first dawning of his responsibility. But they seem not to have impressed him at all in the spiritual disturbance which he describes. In fact, he pronounced them all false and foolish. But there was *one* thing that he could not forget, namely, his *conversion*. That was an argument he could not answer—it was a matter of personal *consciousness*,—he *knew* it as a delightful *fact*, as well as he knew his then present misery. The memory of his youthful joy in God placed the matter of religion in his convictions beyond a doubt, and he was compelled, when he saw the same blessed experience in others at the Greene-

street church, to admit that the work was of God, and was worthy of his first attention.

I would therefore urge the *sound* conversion of children and youth, if I knew they would backslide; for, though they may forget the doctrines of religion, and ignore its duties, they will never forget this divine transformation in their souls, or its rapturous influence. But a spurious conversion is worse than nothing. It affords nothing to look back upon but a miserable failure, and will be likely to hinder one from making any proper effort to save his soul afterward.

3. The case of this man suggests another fact, which is *too* little considered; to wit, the influence of *joyfulness* in religious services. The apparent *happiness* of the worshippers at Greene-street, deeply inpressed him, and followed him home. It was this that attracted him there the second and third time. If they had gone through the exercises in a servile spirit and manner, showing more of fear than joy, he probably would never have appeared upon this stand. But they were "*happy*,"—they *enjoyed* their worship. This reminded him of his religious days, and gave him confidence in the

sincerity of the people, and the genuineness of their religion.

4. The case should also suggest, the importance of human agency. The Church *printed* the notices of the protracted meeting at Greene-street. A brother carried one to this infidel lawyer's office, and laid it on his table. Seeing this, while sitting alone, led him to the church. Another kind and gentlemanly brother, noticing the stranger, went and spoke to him, and invited him to a more eligible seat. The pastor approached him in his pew and conversed with him about his soul. And thus he was led along to the grand consummation stated. Let us learn by these things to be "wise to win souls."

CHAPTER XII.

THE EXPERIENCE OF THE WRITER.

THOUGH the author of these pages has often referred to his own experience in illustration of various points of doctrine and duty, he has never attempted to write it, with any considerable detail, until now. Nor has he ever seen an opportunity so eligible as the present for making it useful to others. While inviting his friends to furnish their experiences for this work, he could hardly do less than to write his own, which he now presents to the glory of God, as follows :—

According to our family register, I was born in Middleborough, Mass., March 21, 1808. My parents were not professors of religion, but attended the Calvinistic Congregational Church, and trained their children to do the same. The doctrines taught by John Calvin were then generally endorsed by the Church, and proclaimed by the ministry, without much attempt to conceal their more forbidding aspects. Any demur among outsiders was regarded as clear

proof of total depravity, and the offender was bravely met with Paul's words, "Who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?"

But still there were many unbelievers in the community, who were not unwilling to discuss these subjects with their, so called, orthodox neighbors. They were free to concede that "God foreordained whatsoever comes to pass," but assumed that he had elected *all* to eternal life, instead of the *few* claimed by the Church, and, therefore, that reprobation was a nullity. This was my father's doctrine, and I used to think he fairly maintained it in the debate, provided the foreordination of all things, conceded by both parties, was correct, of which I had many doubts.

But there were some in the Church who really enjoyed religion. They talked a great deal about it. It was not difficult to distinguish them from other professors, who differed little from respectable sinners, except on communion days, when they sometimes partook of the sacrament. This impressed me that religion is more than a creed, and the impression was con-

firmed by the spirit and life of a most devout minister, who spent a part of his time in town as a teacher.

At the age of fourteen I was deeply awakened, and put myself in the way of the ministers and other workers, hoping to be advised and prayed for, but seemed to attract no attention. After nursing my feelings for a week or two, and becoming pretty well convinced that I was thought to be too young to grapple so grave a subject, I gave it all up, and relapsed into my old indifference, which after a while deepened into utter inconsideration on religious themes. But removing to Easton, Mass., three years later, and finding the prevalent doctrines of the Church distasteful, I spent my Sabbaths at home reading. After the lapse of a few months, being invited by my employer to hear his preacher, I reluctantly consented, and found myself for the first time in a *Methodist* church. Supposing that I would hear about the same that I had heard previously, I determined to listen carefully, and explode the whole on my return, and thus avoid further annoyance from that quarter. But to my surprise I heard something very different,—to wit,—that God

loved *me*, and had provided for my salvation, and that, if I should be damned, it would be purely because I would not accept the terms of salvation.

This placed the subject in a new light. My argument was upset. So, I concluded that I would say nothing against the sermon, and go again in two weeks, when the preacher would probably modify his statements, and place the matter back on the old platform. Thus ended my first Sabbath in a Methodist church.

But that Sabbath revealed other novelties which were not less surprising. In the first place, the minister, Rev. Ebenezer Blake, preached with all his might, and without notes. His object seemed to be to bring the people to God, and his soul was on fire. I had heard good ministers before, but not in this style. Then, the people showed that they were interested, and some of them intensely *happy* in God. One man shouted aloud for joy, while many said "amen," and "glory to God" in smothered tones, indicating that they were under a tremendous spiritual pressure. At the close of the service they fell to shaking hands, and telling how happy they were. This was

all new to me, and I was right in the midst of it, near the old men, close to the pulpit. How they came to seat me there I never knew, but it was well for me, considering how much there was to be learned. It was not certainly that I might hear, for I was not deaf, and the minister, it was said, could be heard a mile away when in his best moods. So much for these points.

Two weeks after I went again, on my own account, because I wanted to hear more about these matters, when, instead of modifying his previous utterances, the preacher confirmed them. Seeing that I had something to do, if I would please God and be saved, I began to consider the subject more seriously, and a few evenings after went to the parsonage to a prayer meeting, where I heard a woman speak in public for the first time in my life, and thought of Paul's words, "I suffer not a woman to teach . . . . but to be in silence," which I had heard often enough to remember. And so far as I could see, she spoke well, and from the heart. I heard a young man speak also, and inferred that he must possess some inspiration that I knew nothing about, for I

would not have done it for a thousand dollars. All these things made a good impression, and I was desirous that some one might speak to me, that I might confess that I believed in the reality of religion, which I had uniformly denied for three years. So, I waited after the close of the meeting, till most of the people had gone, when that same good mother in Israel, an entire stranger, came and asked me if I enjoyed religion, and I made the confession, but committed myself to nothing further. In walking home with a fellow-boarder, —a member of the church, I told him of my old unbelief, of my fears that I was a reprobate, and of my utter stupidity on the subject, and added, most sincerely, but with little emotion, "I believe God is again calling my attention to the subject." This did me good, and I was enabled to say then and there, in the light of the moon, "I am *now* going to begin to seek God with what little feeling I possess, and seek him till *death* if I don't find the blessing before ; and if I am lost, I will have the pleasure of knowing that I tried to serve him and go to heaven from this very hour."

Though I had little emotion, I *knew* that I was a sinner against God, and might be justly cast off, but my purpose to do everything in my power to obey God, and become a Christian, at whatever cost, was as firm as a rock. My mind was *fully* made up. On reaching home I accordingly asked my friend to pray for me, and attempted to pray for myself, though with so little interest, it seemed that God could not hear me. I asked, and followed the advice of the pious, but all availed nothing for a week or two. The heavens seemed to be brass, and my heart hard as adamant. I wanted distressing conviction, and prayed for it, supposing it to be necessary to my salvation, but it did not come. I could neither go backward nor forward, up or down. I knew of nothing more to *do*, or to *forsake*, but still kept doing. So far as any evidence of conversion was concerned, I was in total darkness. So, I continued waiting upon God according to the best light I had, or could obtain from the Bible or the Church.

One morning, being in the mill, where I was an overseer, duty called me to the machine shop, and while engaged with a short job in the turning lathe, I burst into a fit of laughter

without the slightest apparent occasion for it, and laughed hard and long. How to account for it was beyond my power. My first thought was, that I had been playing the hypocrite, in professing to desire religion, and was now making light of it. Then, I was alarmed for fear that all my convictions had left me, and I should never be saved. Still I laughed, though I tried to stop by thinking of death, judgment and other serious subjects. I did not dare to go to my office, though called, for fear of exposing my condition, and discouraging those who had taken special interest in my welfare. However, the fit abated and I went, but with a different countenance from that I had worn for many days. Being asked how I felt, I replied, "No better." One suggested that I was converted, to which I answered, "Then conversion is not what I have taken it to be."

The day passed without much trouble, or much light. Heard a sermon in the evening, which seemed different from any I had ever heard, and began to feel a little hopeful. After the meeting I called into a neighbor's house, where a few of the pious proposed to spend a little time in prayer. When about through,

one asked me if I did not want to pray. That was what I had never done vocally in the presence of others, but it was a suggestion from a respectable source, and might help. So, without knowing whether I *could* pray, I fell on my knees and prayed as well as I was able, which, I presume, amounted to but little in words; but when I arose the floodgates of heaven seemed lifted, and my poor soul was filled with unutterable glory. Then, I walked the room and praised the Lord (not loudly), but from an overflowing heart. "Can it be," I asked, "that God has had mercy on *me?*—the sinner, ME!!" I could sincerely sing—

> "Filled with delight, my raptured soul
> Would here no longer stay;
> Though Jordan's waves around me roll,
> Fearless I'd launch away."

I had sometimes been sorry that I was ever born, and had wished that I had died in my infancy; but now I thanked God that I was born to be born again, and born to *die*. Death had lost its terrors, and God and heaven were full of charms. The solid comforts of that *one hour* exceeded all that I had enjoyed in my previous *nineteen and a half years* of pleasurable sin.

But it was getting late, and I must leave. So, I went out into the street and looked up into the heavens. Such heavens I never saw before. The Spirit witnessed with my spirit that I was a child of God. I was full of love, —love to God and man. I did not dare to go to sleep for fear that I should lose the vision, but I must try, and succeeded at length. But when the morning came I found my heart overflowing with "joy in the Lord." I went to my business as never before. It seemed to me that I was the happiest mortal on earth. Love, joy, peace, long-suffering and other graces possessed my soul. All my old sinful loves and tendencies were gone, and new ones fully engaged my thoughts and feelings. The word of God, previously so dry, was a *new book*. I loved it with profound affection. I was utterly spoiled for my old companionships, and took to the followers of Christ with the fondness of intense satisfaction.

Thus I began the Christian life, and thus I lived in, and enjoyed it, for about one year and five months, while I remained in business, less temptations and trials, which I promptly reported to my spiritual advisers, particularly to

my pious and intelligent class-leader, Mr. Thatcher Pierce, a respectable farmer, who was of great service to me. My chief trouble arose from the thought that I must preach, which I regarded for some time as a temptation of the devil, and tried to banish it from my mind, as I did other temptations. I had never heard about *a divine call* to preach, supposing that preachers were *made* like lawyers and physicians, and I was in no condition to be made one in that way, had I desired it ever so ardently. My *timidity*, to say nothing of other defects, seemed to exclude the idea of my preaching, as perfectly preposterous. I could not speak in public, or even in class-meeting with open eyes for some months. But the idea grew upon me, and oppressed me exceedingly, before I ever mentioned the subject to others, and I felt compelled to entertain it, and *test* it at the cost of a pleasant position and cheering business prospects.

I, therefore, left and went to school, but was so happy in God and interested in the salvation of sinners, that I could not study, and did not until the ardor of my soul was somewhat abated. That was the moment of my first

decline in spiritual life. My previous business was a delight, and rather a help than a damage to my enjoyment. It was the greatest cross of my early life to leave it. It neither taxed my body or mind, and left me free to live in God, as I did truthfully, singing through the long summer days,

> "The day glides sweetly o'er my head,
> Made up of innocence and love;
> And soft and silent as the shades,
> My nightly minutes gently move."

And, I can now say, after more than fifty years in the ministry, that I have never found a position, outside of a few special meetings, in which I had little responsibility, so favorable for personal piety and enjoyment, as that in which I was converted. Private life allowed me ample time to care for my *own soul;* the ministry has always taxed me with care for others. And my care has generally increased with my success, so that even in revivals of great power, I have sometimes enjoyed less of the conscious presence of God, than under less interesting circumstances.

I would not be understood to affirm that I have lived fifty years in the light and joy of my early experiences. I have not, though I am

happy to say, that the "old things" of my youth which were done away in conversion, have never returned, nor any passion for them. My aim has been to do the will of God and serve my Church and race as best I could in all lines of duty that have been open to me. I have enjoyed my work, and God has generally blessed me in it, I mean in my own soul. At several periods I have had *special experiences*, one or two of which I will briefly narrate for the benefit of young ministers who may be similarly situated.

Soon after I entered the ministry, I attempted to preach once or twice at camp-meetings, in obedience to official command, and had hard times. I then refused to preach on such occasions, assuming that I had no camp-meeting voice, which was partially true. Still I attended more or less of such meetings, and felt that I was dodging the cross. Of course I was unhappy, though I labored in other ways to save souls. Near the close of a meeting of the kind I was enabled to see just how foolish it was to make an issue with God and my conscience on that question, and resolved, if spared to come to that place (Old Eastham) the next

year I would preach, if I died in the effort. God seemed to accept the pledge at once, and my soul was filled with delight. I went home saved and happy. That pledge often occurred to me during the year, and filled me with consternation, but was renewed each time. Going upon the ground the following summer, the elder asked, "Will you preach this year?" to which I promptly responded, "Yes, just *when* and as *often* as you please." The time was fixed, and I preached, trembling at first from head to foot; but God blessed me beyond all previous experiences, both in my soul and in the results of my effort. As I closed, it seemed as if I should die with joy. The victory was clearly won, thank God, so far as I can now see, for life; for I have never declined to preach since when it was my duty to attempt it. And the grace received in bearing that cross lasted a long time. I have had many similar experiences of special elevation under different circumstances since, which are not easily forgotten. Nor are they so easily lost, as some imagine. There is a *keeping* power about them. What we need is God *in us*, in our souls,—the spirit of holiness that will hold us by an invis-

ible influence in the sweet fellowship of the Spirit. We may have some religion without all this, but can hardly say we *enjoy* it. Many perform religious duties through *fear*, but they are a burden. This grace makes them delightful. It saves, too, from the *love* of sin,—sinful and doubtful pleasures, frivolous conversation, and trifling company.

Later in life, having been occupied with church finances for many years, in our Book Concern (the most laborious and successful years of my life), I felt the need of some spiritual improvement, and went to a camp-meeting near my home, praying for it, and consecrating myself to God anew, as I was able. Reaching the ground, I was kindly invited upon the stand. Beginning to rain, the congregation immediately dispersed, but the singers remained, and sung several interesting hymns. In the meantime I was looking to God earnestly in prayer. While they were repeating

"I'm trusting, Lord, in Thee,"

I felt a consciousness of some inward change, which, with many doubts, I construed into an answer to my prayer, though I had no such sensible evidence that this was so as seemed to

justify me in avowing it to others. But on returning home that evening, I found that I was an improved man. My heart was wonderfully buoyant, and full of praise. God seemed to be in all my thoughts. The next day I went to my office to write some business letters, but discovered on reading them that they were strongly impregnated with religion, but I let them go. Having adjusted matters, I returned to the camp and remained seven days in delightful communion with the people of God. This little event was followed by an almost continual joyfulness of heart, however engaged, and a corresponding conscientiousness with regard to everything which involves moral responsibility. I am living on this line now, though less joyful, doing the will of God so far as I understand it, and seeking earnestly to win souls to Christ and spread Scriptural holiness over the land, expecting to receive an abundant entrance into his kingdom in due time.

In closing this brief statement, it may be proper to say, that I have read the evidences of Christianity presented by different authors, and have been intellectually convinced that it is

true, and that the Bible is the word of God, but this experience has confirmed my faith in these positions beyond a doubt,—more than all the arguments I ever heard or read. The blind man had a sort of faith that Jesus could give him sight, but he did not know it until he tested him and saw all things clearly. So I believed that he might save somebody, possibly me, but this trial of his promises assured me that he is mighty to save even to the uttermost.

CHAPTER XIII.

RECENT DEMONSTRATIONS AMONG THE HEATHEN.

REV. WILLIAM TAYLOR, in his "*Adventures in South Africa*," presents many interesting experiences of recent occurrence, which seem pertinent to our argument. At Graham's Town one of the most active and efficient members of the Wesleyan Church, appeared at the altar for prayers, and afterward called on Mr. Taylor and gave the following account of himself:—

"I was first awakened when twelve years old, but having no one to instruct me, gradually lost my convictions. Then, twenty years ago, I was greatly awakened, and resolved to be a servant of God, and joined the Wesleyan Church. For several years I strove hard to live right, and attended all the means of grace within my reach. Then I became acquainted with a very bad man, who was the means of leading me astray, and for a short time I was out of the church, but I was very wretched, and made a sincere and humble confession and was readmitted. I then doubled my diligence in

trying to work out my salvation with fear and trembling. I often fasted from Wednesday till Friday. I spent many days in prayer in clefts and caves of the mountains, and often wished that by laying down my life, I could get relief for my soul. . . . During the first week of your preaching, I was thoroughly worked up, but I felt very bitter against you. By last Sabbath I felt so badly, so guilty before God, that I could not show my face ; but spent the day alone in the hills, trying to pray. But on Sabbath night I went again to hear you preach, and when you appealed to murmurers against God, and asked them if they would be willing to have their miserable existence terminated by annihilation, I responded in my heart, 'yes, I would hail such an opportunity with gladness.' I then went forward to the altar of prayer, and cried for help, but found it not.

"The next night, in your sermon on believing, you unraveled every knot of *un*belief by which I have been held down all these years. Your account of that man in New South Wales, who said, 'I can't believe, O, I can't believe,' suited my case exactly, and I said, 'I'll never use that fatal expression again. I do sub-

mit myself to God, living or dying, to do with me just as he likes. I do believe his record concerning his Son. I do have confidence in Jesus, as an all-sufficient Saviour of the very chief of sinners. I *do* accept him as my Saviour now.'—I began at once to get hold on Christ by faith ; and while they were singing,

> 'O, the bleeding Lamb !
> He was found worthy,'

I clearly realized, what I had always admitted in theory, that though I should give all my goods to feed the poor, and my body to be burned, it would profit me nothing ; but the Lamb of God slain for sinners was indeed a sufficient sacrifice for my sins, and I do accept him now as my Saviour. I returned home quietly resting on Christ. About one o'clock that night, while steadily clinging to Jesus, the Holy Spirit so manifested the pardoning love of God to my heart, that I could not restrain my joyous emotions, but went and waked up Mr. Guard (his pastor), and told him that I was saved, and we praised God together. If a legion of angels had told me that all my sins were forgiven, I could not have had a clearer evidence than I had within my heart, through

God's witnessing Spirit. Before that I did not love you ; but ever since, I have loved you so that I could cheerfully lay down my life for you. I ask your pardon for the hard feelings I entertained against you during your first week's services. I see now that I was under the influence of the carnal mind and Satan. The devil has often come since with his old suggestions of unbelief ; but thanks to God, the snare is broken and I am a free man in Jesus." —*pp.* 80, 81.

How many there are in just this condition, working in the church from a general conviction of the truths of religion, but still without any *feeling* sense of their own personal acceptance with God ! What a pity that they should not believe and enter into rest ! Some, like this man, never knew the joy of salvation, but many did once know it and lost it by unfaithfulness. May God hasten the time when they shall sufficiently feel their spiritual poverty to fly to the outstretched arms and be saved.

Some may question the reliability of the evidence of pardon and salvation received and trusted by this man, namely, the witness of the Spirit. But why doubt ? Did he not *feel* it

as strongly as he felt conviction of sin before? And did he not *know* that he was a sinner *then*, and was condemned? Do you answer, "But in the latter case, he *knew* he was a sinner, not only because he *felt* condemned, but because he had broken God's commands." True, but did he not know as well when he received the witness of the Spirit to his adoption, that he was sincerely trying to obey God in all things? Why doubt the *impressions* which assured him of his acceptance, more than those which before convinced him of his condemnation? No felt assurance of acceptance unaccompanied by obedience can be trusted for a moment, it is deceptive, "For this is the love of God that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous." (1 John v. 3.) No other love is genuine.

But to return to Mr. Taylor, who passed on to Chardock. Soon after he left, a Mr. J. W. was happily converted under the preaching of Mr. Guard, and was so anxious about his awakened brother, that he took him 107 miles to Chardock to hear Mr. Taylor, where he also was converted. While there, Mr. W. related his own experience, which is so different in some

particulars from the last named, that we give it, to show the difference between coming *directly* to Christ by faith, and lingering in mental anguish and unbelief. He says :—

"Under the preaching of Rev. Mr. Guard (now in this country) I was awakened by the Spirit of God to a sense of my sad condition as a sinner. I had not bowed my knee in prayer for fifteen years, but being utterly without hope of improving my condition by anything I could ever do, I knelt before God, and in the simplicity of a little child, I told him all about my sad state, and reminded him of his abundant provision of mercy in Christ for just such poor sinners as I was, and that I *then* and *there* thankfully accepted Jesus on his own terms, as my Saviour; and before I arose from by knees, I obtained the forgiveness of all my sins, through Jesus Christ, and now for twenty-three days I have walked in the light. I had every facility a man could ask for enjoying this world, and sought pleasure at every source that leisure and money could command; but I have enjoyed *more real happiness* during these last twenty-three days than in all the *thirty-nine* years of my life before."

This is believing God and trusting alone in Christ, rather than in penitence and prayer.

CHARLES PAMLA

belonged to a family of Amazula chiefs. He was converted through the Wesleyan missionaries, and was one of the first of their *native* preachers. He is a tall, muscular, powerful African, and was designated to open the way for Mr. Taylor to reach the heathen. We give his experience of advancement in religion here, as a fit introduction to the testimonies of other heathen which he interpreted. He says in a letter to Rev. William Henshaw, dated Jan. 1, 1866:

"MY DEAR SIR:—Since I came to Annshaw, by reading Wesley's sermons, I was convinced to seek after entire sanctification, and since our last district meeting I have been praying for it, and trusting to obtain it. I had a sure trust that through the blood of Christ I would obtain the blessing promised to those who come to Christ by faith. About a month ago, one morning very early, I went to pray for the same thing, entire sanctification; and while I was praying and trusting in the blood of Christ, I felt

a small voice speaking through my soul, saying, 'It is done, receive the blessing.' The first thing I felt was ease from the different kinds of thoughts, ease from the world, and from all the cares of the flesh. I felt the Spirit filling my soul, and immediately I was forced to say in my soul, 'For me to live is Christ.' And I gave up my body, soul, thoughts, words, time, property, children and everything that belongs to me, to the Lord, to do as he pleases."—*p.* 96.

Upon this he immediately commenced to instruct others according to the Bible and Wesley's sermons, and is still at work most successfully. Mr. Taylor gives him a high character. Of the numerous experiences which he interpreted during their labors together, we transcribe a few that are directly to our point.

1. "An old heathen was waked up by songs in the night, sung by his grand children, returning from the meeting where they had found Jesus. The old man hearing the wonderful story which these young witnesses had to tell, took up his stick, and hobbled off straightway to Annshaw, arriving about the break of day. Hearing the voice of praise in the chapel at the

morning prayer-meeting, he went in and heard the prayers and prophesyings of God's people. The secrets of his heart were made manifest, and falling down on his face, he worshipped God, and was enabled that morning to report that God was in them of a truth, from a blessed experience of salvation in his own heart."

The reality of this sudden change was immediately demonstrated by the revolution which he made in his family relations by placing himself squarely on the gospel platform, though it must have cost him great self-denial.

2. "A native servant girl whom Mr. Taylor was trying to instruct at the altar, was in great agony, and among other wild breathings to which she gave utterance, was this: 'That shawl, I bought it at Mullett's—that shawl! that shawl!!'

"'What about it?' inquired Mr. Taylor.

"'O, sir, part of the money for that shawl was stolen, I stole one and three-pence of it from my mistress. I'll pay mistress, I'll pay her all, I'll pay her double!' Her mistress, though unconverted, would take no money, but forgave her freely. Then the poor girl took the shawl, tore it to shreds, and burned it. She

had a hard struggle, but at last the dark cloud of guilt and sin rolled away, and she was made happy in Jesus her Saviour.'

3. "While the converts were talking with earnestness in a meeting at Kamastone, Mr. Taylor turned to his interpreter, saying, 'See that Kaffir Boanerges, how he talks! I wish I could understand his language. Charles, what is that man saying?'

"'O,' he says, 'I never knew that I was such a sinner, till the Holy Ghost shined into me, then I saw that I was one of the worst sinners in the world. O, I cried to God, gave my wicked heart to him, and received Christ. Glory to Jesus! He has pardoned all my sins!'

"Near by was a large Kaffir woman talking. 'Charles,' said Mr. Taylor, 'ask that woman where she belongs. With what marvellous grace and eloquence she talks! What does she say, Charles?' 'She says that she walked from Heald Town, forty-six miles, to get to this meeting. She could not get to your meetings in Heald Town, but heard of the great work of God there, and has come here to get you to tell her how to come to Jesus. She says

she believed what her friends at Heald Town told her about the great salvation; but now she has found it herself, and says the half had not been told her.'

"'What is that Kaffir man saying, Charles?' 'He says, I was going on in my sins, and did not know that I was in any danger till to-day. But to-day the Holy Ghost shined upon my path. I saw hell open just close before me, and I was rushing into it; but I turned to God, and laid hold on Christ, and he has saved my soul from hell.'"

These are only fair specimens of hundreds of cases that occurred weekly among the natives, and others. It seems almost incredible that such poor ignorant idolatrous sinners can be transformed so suddenly and yet so thoroughly, but the *facts* are unquestionable.

Since we have been writing, a high churchman has gravely announced that,

"The grace of *baptism* consists of a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness. The spiritual act which is to restore the forfeited blessing must renew the forfeited grace, and repentance corresponds to the mystical death unto sin. *Absolution* opens the closed

doors of the kingdom of heaven, and imparts the life of Christ, the renewed gift of righteousness."—*Churchman.*

When or where did any such result follow the baptism, or absolution referred to? By what evidence was it attested? These ceremonies have often been performed, but the subject, so far as tangible evidence to himself or others is concerned, remained the same as before, without God and without hope in the world. But it is not so when God absolves and renews, as he does in Christian experience. The difference between these two methods is remarkable. God save us from substituting a *ceremony* for *salvation!*

The manner in which Mr. Taylor dealt with African inquirers, may be seen in part from the following extract:—

"'Do come,' said a friend, 'and speak again to Mr. Fynney, he seems to be sinking into utter despair!' As I approached him he exclaimed, 'O Mr. Taylor, I am lost! I feel the dreadful ivy of sin around my soul, and I can't break it. I feel that there are, at least, a thousand devils in me, they are all alive in me, and I can't get them out! Do you think there

is any chance for me?' (What an opportunity for *absolution!*)

"'Your case,' said Mr. Taylor, 'is bad enough, you see, and all the good men and good angels in the universe combined, could not eject a single devil from your heart, but Jesus Christ can save you this moment. He cast a legion of devils out of a Gadarene by a word, and he will save you if you will surrender yourself to God, and, believing his testimony, receive Christ as your Saviour. You are under the sentence of death, your life is forfeited, and you can't do better than throw your whole being on the mercy of God in unreserved submission to his will, to do with you as he likes. Do you surrender to him?'

"'O, yes, I do by his help give myself to God to do with me as he wishes.'

"'Have you sufficient confidence in Jesus, from what you have read and heard about him, to accept him as your Saviour?'

"'O, yes, I am willing to accept him, I have no hope in any other.'

"'Thank God for the willingness, that is the fruit of his awakening Spirit, but it must

be developed into the fact of an actual acceptance of him. Do you accept him now ?'

"'O, I can get no light !'

"'No, and you never will get the light till you receive Christ.'

"'O, but I can't feel his love !'

"'No, you never will feel his love, till you believe on him and take him as your Saviour. You want to feel his pardoning love, and then believe. That is expecting the cure before you accept the physician, which is quite out of the question.'

"'O, I feel so utterly wretched ! Is there no hope for me ?'

"'None whatever, while you look to yourself. The sailor said to his fellow, "You may just as well look into the hold of the ship to find the north star, as to look to yourself for salvation." You must accept the Great Physician by faith, faith in his gospel credentials, give your case into his hands, consenting to his treatment, and leave him to exercise his own wisdom and skill to cure you in his own way.'

"'But what if I get no relief? I can't feel any witness of the Spirit.'

"'You still want to get relief, and feel the

Spirit's witness before you are pardoned, which is utterly impossible. . . . Your business is to repent, and believe the gospel—surrender to God, and accept Christ, and you may be sure the Holy Spirit will not fail to fulfil his engagement in the matter. Do you, my dear brother, now accept Christ ?'

"'I don't feel that I do.'

"'It is not by feeling, but by believing, not presumption, but the most intelligent faith in God's most intelligible testimony. If you believe what God says about Christ, is Christ not worthy of your confidence, and if so, why not entrust your case in his hands, and take him now as your Saviour ? If you have any mental reservations, you are not accepting him, but dictating terms to him which he will spurn. You can accept him only on his own terms as a Saviour *from sin*, with your heart's *consent*.'

"'O, I do give up everything ! I'll die if I don't get relief.'

"'Yes, and you will perish eternally if you do not receive the only Saviour of sinners. Now, in full confidence in the blood-shedding of Jesus for the sins of the whole world,—his prayers, as your great High Priest,—his power

to save the very chief of sinners,—his invitations and promises,—confidence in his willingness to save to the uttermost all that came unto God by him, accept him as your Saviour. . . . Do you accept him ?'

"'Yes, I do accept him ! I do accept him. I do accept him—Glory be to God, he saves me ! He has pardoned all my sins, and delivered my soul ! Glory to God and the Lamb, I am saved !'

"The next morning," says brother Taylor, "Frederic B. Fynney, for that is his name, said to me, 'I know four African languages. I know the Kaffir better than I know the English, and I owe such a debt of gratitude to God for saving my soul, and I feel such sympathy and love for the Kaffirs, that I believe God has called me to devote my life in leading them to Jesus.' He commenced preaching straightway."

OF OTHER CONVERTS FROM HEATHENISM.

Let us now leave Africa and pass over to India, where many are believing and being born again. During Mr. Taylor's labors in Bombay, Manekjee Mody, an intelligent Zoroastrian

heathen, was happily converted. The account of the matter which he publicly gave at various places and in several languages, was as follows :—

"Friends, you know me. You know what a sincere zealot I was for the Parsee religion. After the death of my wife, I got up at three o'clock in the morning, and, with my incense and sandalwood, went, in those dark hours of the night, to the Tower of Silence ; and there, near the bones of my ancestors—where my own father, and my own dear wife had been given over to the vultures—I burnt the sandalwood, and in the odor of my incense offering mingled my prayers and groans and tears, from a broken heart. Let no man doubt my sincerity ; I was sincere. Every morning at three o'clock, when you were all asleep in your beds, I repeated this daily for two years ; but found no rest for my sin-burdened soul. I have no quarrel with my nation, and I don't abuse our great man, Zoroaster ; but he was not a Saviour. Our Parsee religion has no Saviour to offer to our struggling people ; hence I could find no relief from it. Then I was led to examine the claims of Jesus Christ. From the records of the

Bible, and the testimony of his people, I became convinced that he was indeed the Saviour sent by God to deliver poor sinners from their sins. I sought him ; and in Forbes-street Hall, I submitted to him, and received him as *my* Saviour ; and at once he delivered me from my sins, and gave rest and peace to my soul. Now I know that I am a child of God, and that the Lord Jesus abides with me, and preserves me from sinning, and sustains me under all my trials and persecutions."

Another Hindoo of the same country had a similar experience, modified in some particulars. It shows the importance of Christians exemplifying religion as well as teaching it.

KRISHNA

testified, "I read the New Testament when quite a young man, and was deeply impressed with its doctrines, and especially with the *example* of Jesus and his disciples. I thought surely this is God's book, and these were God's people. I studied their characteristics closely, and felt a desire to know whether or not there were any such people now living on the earth. So, I met an English gentleman in the street,

and said to him, 'I have been reading a very interesting book.'

"'What book is that?'

"'It is a book called the New Testament.'

"'Yes, that is indeed a good book.'

"'I was very much impressed with the example of Jesus and his disciples, and feel a great desire to know if there are any such people living now.'

"'O yes; there are many Christians living in Bombay.'

"'Indeed!—will you kindly show me one?'

"'O yes; come along with me.'

"I went with him a little way, and we met a man; and my guide said, pointing to him, 'There is a Christian.' I followed the said Christian straightway, and sought his acquaintance, and became intimate with him and others who were said to be Christians. I studied them as best I could in their social life, religious assemblies, treatment of their servants, and business transactions. I compared their lives with the lives of the apostles, and could not find a single point of correspondence. The examples of those Christians paralyzed my understanding, and I became an atheist. I

remained nominally a Hindoo, but practically an atheist, till I came to brother Taylor's meetings last year. There I saw scores of people who passed for Christians, stand up publicly, and with flowing tears, confess that they were miserable sinners. They went down upon their knees, and were instructed and prayed for, and afterwards testified to the people that they had accepted Jesus Christ as their Saviour, and that he had taken away their sins and given them a new heart. . . . I then studied these people, —observed their conduct towards their servants, their social life, their business habits, and their religious experiences; and found a complete correspondence. I found in them the same patience, meekness, truthfulness, honesty, love and sympathy, that I had read about in the lives of Jesus and his disciples; and I came clearly to the conclusion, 'after all, this is God's book, and these are God's people.' Thus I was awakened, and became a Christian."—*Four Years' Campaign in India,* pp. 284, 285.

Christians should remember that they are constantly watched, not only by open enemies, but by sincere inquirers,—by the former to get something against them—to neutralize their

influence, and by the latter to ascertain whether their lives confirm the doctrines they inculcate. Few are converted to God by mere teaching in the absence of striking examples of experience. Krishna is not an eccentric character. Sinners generally need to see specimens of religion in actual life, and are more impressed by them than by mere descriptions or argument. Reading or hearing "that being justified by faith, we have peace with God, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God," and seeing no such peace and joy in the people who claim to be thus justified, they can but find it difficult to accept the proposition, though they find it in the Bible. But on the other hand, let them see the experience clearly manifested and fully sustained by a life of holiness, they will accept it, notwithstanding the most serious objections which the carnal mind may suggest. "At one period of my life," said a young minister, "I was nearly an infidel; but there was one argument in favor of Christianity which I could not refute, namely, the consistent conduct of my father."

This explains why comparatively ignorant and incompetent teachers are often marvellously

successful in bringing sinners to Christ,—they excel in experience. That is, they *enjoy* religion and exhibit its charms better than they can explain and defend it in words. By this means, too, it has often been maintained by the poor and illiterate, where learning and popular influence have operated against it.

Since the above was written, we have encountered other experiences of idolaters particularly appropiate to our purpose. At a Missionary Convention held in New York, Dec. 16, 1878, Dr. J. P. Newman, who had recently visited our Asiatic missions, gave an interesting account of their spiritual success. The first case he presented, was that of an elder of the church at Yokahama :—

"His name," he said, "is Okuna-Masa-Tsna ; he is a native of Yeddo, and is now fifty-one years old. He was educated in Tokio, and speaks and writes both the Chinese and Japanese languages with fluency and accuracy. Thirty-three years ago he took the royal prize for his proficiency in written Chinese. In stature, in physiognomy, in the mildness and intelligence of his countenance, in the gentleness of his spirit, and his zeal for Christ, he reminded

me of Bishop Bowman. His placid face was to me the expression of a soul at peace with God. He is in repute among his brethren for his deep and joyous piety. I once heard him pray at the close of the morning service, and his prayer was long and earnest for the descent of the Holy Ghost. Naturally devout, he had accepted in turn the prevailing religions of Japan. He had tried Sintoism, with its idolless altars and simple ritual ; he had mastered the rationalistic and cheerless doctrines of Confucius ; he had embraced Buddhism, with its incarnation and hopes of immortality ; but neither brought peace to his anxious soul. To be happy, he had made long and weary pilgrimages to Fusiyama, whither, footsore and fainting, he went to pray to the spirits of his ancestors. In the hour of his despair he was advised to visit the millions of idol shrines in near and distant parts of the empire ; and, when exhausted with fasting and fatigue, he endured a cold bath to renew him for the hopeless journey. He was a living skeleton, and death seemed imminent. But a year ago he realized that he had made a mistake in the choice of his religion, and that Buddhism could bring no comfort to his soul. Convinced

of this, he also felt that he could not help himself, and that he must look to a higher power. For half a year he was taught by those good missionaries, Messrs. Brown and Ballagh, and during all that time he struggled in prayer. He said to me, 'I was very sorry; I cried from a sense of my wickedness; my sins were more numerous than the hairs of my head; I had done great bad things; I felt that I must give up all my life to Jesus; and then I felt very happy.' 'Prior to this,' he said, 'I was ambitious to be a high official and have plenty of money, but when I became a Christian I had no more such desires; while a Buddhist I loved saki (whiskey), but no saki now.' Like Cornelius of Cesarea, Okuna-Masa-Tsna was converted in his own house while at prayer, and he immediately told his wife and children, all of whom are now Christians. When converted he felt he must be clean. 'I wanted clean clothes, and to wash my body.'"

Going to Shanghai, Rev. Dr. Yates, of the Baptist mission, with whom Dr. Newman was stopping, "called in his native preacher, Rev. Wong Ping San, the pastor of the native Church. He is a large man, fifty years old, and

has a strong and sincere countenance. If Bishop Harris were only a foot taller he would resemble him. He has been a Christian eighteen years, is an educated man, and is esteemed one of the ablest preachers in China. In his preaching he loves to dwell upon the deep things of the Spirit; on the power of that Spirit in the human heart; on a 'Saviour to anchor to,' as he himself expressed it to me. He had long been the teacher in Chinese of Dr. Yates and Dr. Crawford, but remained unchanged in his religious views. Upon his recovery from a severe illness he read through the New Testament, and said to Mr. Crawford, 'That is a good book, and teaches good morals.' He was answered, 'You are not competent to appreciate the worth and authority of such a book, for your heart is not up to it.' This surprised Wong Ping San, who inquired the reason, and was informed that the 'carnal mind comprehendeth not the mind of the Spirit.' He read it again, and said to the missionary: 'No man can obey the severe moral precepts of that book. What Confucius taught could be done, but not so what was taught by Christ.' But his mind was not at rest. The denunciations in the

New Testament against sin had made a deep impression upon his mind, and he began to dread the fearful consequences of his sinful life. He was now deeply awakened to a sense of his lost condition: 'I felt that I was sewn up in a sack of sin in which was all evil, and I could not get out of it. All I could do was to pray like a beggar. My room seemed filled with all manner of sin and evil. One night, when sleep had departed from me, I rose and prayed; I returned to my bed, but could not sleep. Again I prayed, but the cords of my guilt were drawn tighter and tighter about me. I felt I was going down to hell then and there. In my despair I asked God to help me, and in a moment I felt better. The sack of sin was broken, and I was free. I had no desire then to sleep. I was very happy. I did not know what was the matter with me. I thought myself crazy. But the missionary told me the Holy Ghost had come into my heart, removed all my sins, and made me so joyful. I was a different man, and felt differently toward all men. I now feel secure in Christ.'"—*Christian Advocate, Dec.* 26, 1878.

What but the word of God, I ask again, can

produce such results on people so utterly sunk in sin and superstition? When they commenced testing Christianity they had but little faith, yet God led them into the full realization of its saving power. So long as missions accomplish such marvellous transformations, they should be liberally supported.

These experiences indicate one peculiarity of Christianity, not found in any other religion, and which ought to be more generally considered and presented. Most religions that recognize conscious existence beyond the grave, propose to save their votaries there, but Jesus saves all who come to him, *from their sins*, and the truth of his claims, therefore, may be tested *now*. When a living missionary lately presented this point to a Chinese congregation, a stalwart native asked him, "Is that what you claim?" "It is," answered the preacher. "But see here," said the native, "I am a sinner, a great sinner.—I am a gambler,—I am a liar,—I am an adulterer,—I am full of all manner of sin, and I cannot break off. Do you mean to say that Jesus can save me from all this *now*, and make me holy?" "I do," answered the missionary. "But how is this to be done?"

inquired the sinner. "Come here and kneel down and ask him to do it," said the missionary. He came and they engaged in prayer. After a little, the man arose and said that a change had come over him,—which he did not understand. The next day he stood up in the congregation and appealing to his neighbors, said :

"You know me, what a great sinner I have been, but yesterday I came to Jesus and asked him to forgive my sins, and take them away, and I feel that he has done it. Before, I loved my sins so much that I could not leave them, now I don't want them any more,—he has taken away all my taste for them, and I believe in him with all my heart."

With this demonstration of the truth of the gospel and power of Jesus to save the worst of men, he went out, says the missionary, telling his experience, and brought many to the knowledge of the truth.

Do you ask how this is done? I answer, just as Christ gave sight to the blind, cast out devils, or raised the dead,—by the power of God. The means, in both cases, are so simple and forceless of themselves, that nothing can

be claimed for them, that God may have all the glory of the work.

CHAPTER XIV.

OTHER REMARKABLE EXPERIENCES ATTESTED BY LIVING WITNESSES.

THE writer of these pages commenced his ministry purely with the view of bringing sinners to Christ. This was the object that engrossed his mind while preparing for the work, and that has controlled his action ever since. Through the mercy of God, he has witnessed the conversion of some thousands, and received many into the church, in several places from fifty to five or six hundred during a pastorate of two years. He has always taught that religion is demonstrable by experiment, and has labored more to induce people to try it for themselves, than to substantiate it by abstract reasoning.

In the spring of 1831, he became the pastor of a church that was so completely divided in opinion and feeling that it seemed impossible

to save it from dissolution. Still, there were a few young members who were not involved in any of the controversies of the hour. These were combined and committed to a direct effort to seek the lost; hoping in time to divert attention from the disturbing questions, and gather strength from without. Just as we were beginning to hope, a storm of fanaticism burst upon us, and threatened the most serious results. This was in the afternoon. We preached again in the evening with little power, and less faith, feeling crushed by what had occurred.

But we had no sooner closed the sermon, than a fine young man started, without an invitation, from near the door, and came to the altar, in evident distress, asking us to pray for him. I then opened the way, and immediately *fourteen* others came forward and knelt by his side. Several professed to find the pearl of great price. That young man became a thorough Christian and died in the faith. The next night *eleven* were converted, and the work ran like fire, till many became new creatures in Christ. It was a genuine work of the Holy Spirit. God saw our dilemma, and came to the rescue. One lady

of influence who had acted a bitter part in the controversies that had been raging for years, was so awakened that she sought those whom she had wronged, and falling at their feet, begged them with tears to forgive her. Men, of whom we knew little, were terribly alarmed at their homes. One awoke in the night and found his room full of light, and began to cry for mercy.

A case of special interest was that of a professed infidel who attended no church. For the sake of his family, he proposed to come with us on certain prudential conditions, which were accepted. Six months after, he came forward for prayers, with his wife, who was a sincere seeker, and addressed the preacher, saying that "he had no conviction, but was willing, as an experiment, to do anything that he might suggest." They knelt together at the altar, and prayed. No change was manifest. The next morning that gentleman led his family in prayer, and thus he went on in the line of duty till light came, and demonstrated that the work was of God, and that he was a new man.

Many young men and boys professed to be born again. Several of them are still living,

and are solid men, both temporally and spiritually. We shall never forget one, a chubby *waif* of the sea, who floated into port on a whale ship, from some foreign country. His prospects were not bright for earth or heaven, when he first appeared among us; but we were glad to see him, and commended him to God, who renewed him by his grace. We have lately met him, now a wealthy, venerable old gentleman. He has proved godliness to be "profitable unto all things."

When stationed at Worcester, Mass., in 1837, a gentleman was converted whose experience, as related by himself, was something as follows:—

"I was a Universalist, and bitterly opposed to religion. Passing to and from my house to my store, I came in full view of the Methodist church. Seeing the smoke issuing from the chimney every morning (during a protracted meeting), and the house lighted up every evening, I thought what a set of fools they were to spend so much time in meetings, and could not imagine what they could do to keep themselves interested. And the longer they continued the worse I felt about it, and the more I denounced

them. Finally, I concluded that I would go in just *one* evening and hear for myself. I did so, and heard a sermon that cut me to the heart, so that when the invitation was given to seekers to come forward for prayers, I went. I prayed for myself. I sought the Lord with all my heart, though it seemed to be of little avail. At length he spoke peace to my soul, and I was filled with joy in believing. I loved him with all my heart—I loved the Christians I used to hate,—I loved everybody, and wanted all to experience the joys of salvation. I told my friends and neighbors what a great change had taken place. Since then I have been happy in God."

That occurred over forty years ago, but the fire then kindled still continues to burn. Being in Worcester a few months ago, I called upon the venerable brother, still at his business, and found him old and gray, but as happy in God as in his younger days. He *knows* the word of God is true, for he has proved it by experience.

Some people find it hard to believe in so great a change in so little time. Their philosophy requires much time and hard work to

reform great sinners, if indeed they can be reformed at all. The Bible proposes short work and marvellous results. When I proposed to Capt. M—— to seek the Lord and become a Christian, he thought it imposible for him to live religion, and continue his business—ship-building. Pointing to his workmen, scattered about the yard, he said to me one day, "There is as hard a set of men as you ever saw, and the fact is, I have to do considerable swearing to keep them straight. Now, suppose I should get religion as you talk, and then come down here and *rip out* to my men as I do sometimes, they would laugh, and I should be in a pretty box." He had no idea that religion would break up that habit, till I told him if he should get the kind that I recommended, it would take all the "*swear*" out of him.

He soon after sought and found. Some weeks later, I called and asked about the "swearing." "Well," said he, "it is very strange, but it is a fact, that though I think my men have acted worse than common, perhaps to try me, I have not used a profane word, nor even thought of it. I seem to have been kept from it without an effort."

Mr. B—— was a Boston drunkard of the lowest type. He was clear down, and was hesitating whether to go to a certain Baptist church and invoke the help of God, or to leap into the dock, and end his miserable life by suicide. He went to the church, and found it closed. In passing through Bennett-street, he saw a light in my vestry and entered, the most unpromising looking subject that could be imagined. When I called for inquirers, he came forward and laid himself upon the altar. We prayed for him. Several of my brethren accompained him to his attic home, where they found an unhappy wife and two boys. In a few days he came out joyful in God, not only saved from drinking, but from the *love* of liquor, and the power of temptation. He had signed the pledge, he informed me, more than *twenty* times and broken it. He said "he *could not* keep it." But religion delivered him, and he went forth preaching it as the drunkard's only hope. He was a man of talent, and the last I heard of him he was proclaiming this glad news to the drunkards of New Orleans.

Thus the word of God is fully demonstrated, "Though your sins be as *scarlet*, they shall be

as white as snow; though they be red like *crimson*, they shall be as wool." The meaning is, that, though the *love* of sin may be as settled and fixed as these *fast* colors, the grace of God can change it to hatred.

While preaching in 1848 at a camp-meeting in Southampton, Mass., a massive, intellectual stranger appeared in the congregation, and became greatly interested. As I was inviting inquirers to come forward for prayer, near the close of the services, he asked the privilege of speaking, which I promptly granted. Standing up well back from the platform, with the tears coursing down his broad and bronzed face, he said :—

"I am a stranger in these parts. I live in the State of New York. I came to this neighborhood on business, and hearing of this meeting, thought I would drive in and see what was going on. I am distressed by what I have heard, I am a miserable sinner, spending my life in making money, which I do not need. Now, Mr. Porter," said he, "do you think it at all proper for me, under these circumstances, to come forward for prayers?"

"Yes," I responded, "eminently so." He

came and knelt with others, and was remembered in powerful prayer by several ministers. He then addressed me again, apparently under the highest spiritual pressure, asking, "Do you think, Mr. Porter, that it will be at all proper for me to pray for myself?" "Certainly," I answered, when he knelt, and offered such a prayer as I never heard before and have not heard since, so full of confession, humiliation, consecration, faith and power. It was answered, and there was a great calm.

Taking me aside, before he left, he told me his business, which was legitimate,—that "the world had been his god, and had kept him from following his honest convictions,—that he had money enough, and that he was going directly home to consecrate *it*, and *himself* to Christ, who had redeemed and saved him." Some months after I received a letter from him showing in what manner he had carried his resolutions into effect, embracing the appropriation of thousands of dollars to the cause of God.

Mr. P——, of Lynn, Mass., was a sinner of the rankest growth, past middle life. His description of his own profligacy was terrible,

and we never heard any one question the truth of it. He was nearly everything that was bad. How he happened to come into my meeting I cannot remember, or what it was that awakened him. But he did come and he sought the Lord with others at the altar. After a little, he professed to be a new creature in Christ Jesus, and showed that he *was* so, in his feelings and in all the relations of life. He at once became industrious, temperate, moral and intensely happy and devout. He was a man of strength, physically and intellectually, and witnessed for Christ in a most powerful manner. Our officials were naturally enough a little afraid of him at first, but were soon satisfied that God was with him. His subsequent life and death were full of spiritual delights.

We might mention other conversions among this class of sinners, but it is unnecessary. The case of a *moralist*, and a few remarks upon it, shall close this chapter.

He was a personal friend, and a business man of unusual ability and success. He kept the Sabbath with Puritan rigidity,—was uniformly at church, and paid his full share of its expenses. It was a settled principle with him

to give *one-tenth* of his income to benevolence. With these and other corresponding qualities he could hardly accept the doctrine of *total* depravity, or the necessity of the new birth. But marrying a young lady of decided piety, he began to see in the light of her beautiful example, wherein he was deficient. She glowed with love and hope, while he was fearful and desponding. Revivals came and went, but he remained the same. The solicitude of his wife became intense, and she privately asked the prayers of her lady friends in his behalf. At length he began to attend some of the week-day services,—then he took the position of a seeker, but it was hard to renounce all his good works, and be saved by *grace* alone. His friends feared that he never would obtain deliverance. But after long seeking, one Sabbath evening, God smiled upon him, and he went to his home a happy man. It was a genuine work. It did not make him honest, temperate or benevolent, for he was all that before ; but it made him a *Christian*,—a working Christian and a happy man, and he followed God to his dying moments in a most remarkable manner.

While publicans and harlots ordinarily go into the kingdom of God before moralists and Pharisees, they may be saved by coming to the Mighty One, who turns none empty away.

In estimating the value of these facts, it is necessary to consider that the subjects of them were enemies of God and the Christian religion, born and trained in different places, and under different circumstances, and held nothing in common but sin. It was no part of their plan to become Christians until something transpired to call their special attention to the subject. Then, instead of waiting to traverse the arguments for and against religion, before doing anything else, they determined to test it, and immediately followed the advice of those who had done so before. This was reasonable, —the only proper course to take. Consultation and reading may convince the understanding with regard to religion, but it cannot give a proper idea of it. This is obtained by experience, alone. The blind man had no correct notion of the appearance of material things until Christ healed him, nor was it possible for him to have. But being healed, he *knew* exactly what it means to see.

So these persons, knowing little of religion itself, but believing it to be something good, took the prescribed steps, and found it to surpass their highest expectations; and could no longer question the truth of the Bible when they came to read it in the light of this wonderful demonstration.

Another benefit growing out of this experience is, increased confidence in those parts of the word of God which we cannot readily test. Finding the promises of the gospel in reference to the repenting sinner and the believing saint to be true, we naturally believe that those which insure heaven to Christians beyond the grave are also true, though we cannot demonstrate them as we do some others. And this confidence often becomes so strong that it seems like positive *knowledge*, and we "rejoice in the hope of the glory of God." Thus, says St. Paul, "We *know* that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." (2 Cor. v. 1.)

This experience gives reality and importance, too, to the threatenings of the Bible. Wicked men have strong aversion to them, and try to

believe that they are not true in their most obvious sense. But yielding the point, so far as to try some of God's promises, and finding them true, they can see no reason for rejecting his threatenings. Hence they become intensely alarmed for their friends, and make a vigorous effort to bring them to Christ. Converts, who are not more or less affected in this way, lack one of the best evidences of the genuineness of their piety.

CHAPTER XV.

CHRISTIANITY PROVED BY ANSWERS TO PRAYER.

HAVING referred in the outset of this discussion to the plan and promises of God with regard to prayer, it only remains for us to show that his word therein is sustained by experimental facts. The following quotations indicate something of what we have reason to expect from him :—

"The Lord is nigh . . . . to all that call upon him *in truth*. . . . He also will hear their cry, and will save them." (Psa. cxlv. 18, 19.)

"Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things which thou knowest not." (Jer. xxxiii. 3.)

"Ask," says the Saviour, "and it shall be given you ; seek, and ye shall find. . . . For every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth." (Matt. vii. 7, 8.)

"Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." (John xvi. 23, 24.)

The promises of God on this subject are many, broad and comprehensive, but they are all conditional. There can be no fair test of their truth, where the conditions are not complied with, which is the case, probably, with regard to most of the prayers offered. "Ye ask and receive not," says St. James, "because ye ask *amiss*, that ye may *consume it upon your lusts*." (iv. 3.) Many are out of position to ask for anything, and yet ask for wrong objects, and that not to improve their character, but to increase their opportunities for sin.

God only hears *right* prayer, that is, *honest* prayer, which seeks a right object, for a proper purpose, and in the spirit of subordination to his will. That kind of prayer he *will* hear, and answer in the bestowment of the precise thing desired, or something better. The children of God often ask for what would harm, rather than help them. Even the great prophet Elijah made this mistake, while fleeing before the infuriated Jezebel. "It is enough," he said, "now, O Lord, take away my life." (1 Kings xix. 4.) But instead of doing so, the Lord led him in the way of usefulness for

awhile, and then sent a chariot of fire and took him up into heaven. (2 Kings ii. 11.)

The answers to prayer recorded in the Bible are demonstrative. That received by Jacob, when he wrestled until the breaking of the day (Gen. xxxii. 28); by Moses for his idolatrous brethren (Exod. xxxii. 33.); by Elijah, in his contest with the prophets of Baal (1 Kings xviii. 38.); by Solomon, when he asked for wisdom (1 Kings iii. 12), are all directly to the point. The New Testament is equally fruitful in examples to the same effect. Paul prayed, and was directed to go to Damascus. He prayed in prison, and God sent an earthquake to deliver him. Prayer released Peter, too, from his national norrowness, and a little later, from the murderous grasp of King Herod. Indeed, the early followers of Christ lived in prayer, and God answered them.

Says the learned St. Chrysostom, of the fourth century, in reviewing its benefits, "The power of prayer hath subdued the strength of fire; bridled the rage of lions; hushed anarchy; extinguished wars; appeased the elements; expelled demons; burst the chains of death; opened the gates of heaven; assuaged diseases;

repelled frauds; rescued cities from destruction; and stayed the sun in its course; in a word, hath destroyed whatever is an enemy to man."

But we must ask according to the *will of God.* This, with regard to spiritual blessings, we may largely learn from the Scriptures. In other matters, such as our own, or the recovery of another from sickness, the kind of business we should follow, and the like, we can only infer his will from circumstances. While we may have no doubt of his love or ability, it may still be a question whether the thing we desire is really the best for us. Therefore, it will be impossible to ask in undoubting faith.

But sometimes God moves his children by his Spirit to ask for the most improbable benefits, and they do so with confidence, and with complete success. Thus,

A pastor in Boston, who had watched the apparent decline of one of the leading ladies of his church for months, but saw no possible escape for her, was powerfully impressed to pray for her recovery. Everything in her surroundings seemed to require that she should live. But the prospects were against her. She was much reduced by consumption, and to cap the

climax, was seized with the smallpox, which had about completed its work, so that her physician said she must die, as one of her children had a few days before. But the pastor was so deeply and strangely moved to pray for her recovery, that he went to see her, and kneeling in her darkened room with her husband, he prayed loud and earnestly for her recovery, and *nothing else*. On rising he asked her if she expected to die, to which she whispered this answer, "I did expect to before you came, but now I think I shall recover." Soon after the doctor called, and noticing a great change for the better, asked her husband what he had been doing for her. "*Praying*," he replied. She was soon about her house in her former good health, and is still living.

Many other pastors have had similar experiences, though they have not always been able to command such faith, where their desire for recovery was most intense, and the prospects more encouraging. The fact that such cases do occur, is not sufficient to justify the belief that they may become general, for we must all die. Indeed, constituted as we are, it is highly desirable that we should do so. Any proposi-

tion, therefore, to test the power of prayer, when we do not know it to be the will of God to bestow the object sought, however earnestly and seriously prayed for, is not pertinent to the subject.

But in spiritual things we are not thus restricted. Christ died for all, and the Spirit is sent forth to draw all men unto him. The testimony which we propose to offer will bear more especially upon this class of benefits. But even here we must distinguish between blessings asked for ourselves and those asked for others. In the first case, only *two* parties are concerned, —in the last there are *three*. However correctly we may pray for our friend, or however well disposed God may be toward him, our prayers will not save him, unless he should acquiesce in the work. But let us come directly to the facts of experience.

A prayer-meeting was proposed by a profane man of a place in New Hampshire, called "Hell Corner," embracing about twenty families. "You are getting very pious," said he to a woman who had rebuked him for swearing. "Well," she responded, "I should think it time for some of us to be getting religious."

"If you feel that way," he answered, "suppose we have a prayer-meeting in your house?" to which she seriously assented. The time was fixed, and a backslider enlisted to lead, most of the people regarding it as a joke. But the leader broke down in his prayer, and the attempt to sing proved a sad fuilure. Still, another meeting was appointed and a neighboring deacon went with fear and trembling to conduct it.

"I had been there but a few minutes," he said, "before I felt that the Spirit of the Lord was there." Four or five hardened sinners were struck under conviction at the first meeting,—several converted at the next, and thus the work went on with amazing power, until many were believed to be born of the Spirit, and the neighborhood greatly reformed. —*Power of Prayer*, p. 119.

This was a singular beginning of a good work. God seemed to have suggested prayer to a wicked woman, as a means of introducing religion among a prayerless, profane people; and when he leads by his Spirit, a very little and imperfect prayer achieves great results.

"A prayer-meeting was started in Kalama-

zoo, Mich., suggested by similar meetings in other places. At the first service the leader read the following:—'A praying wife requests the prayers of this meeting for her unconverted husband, that he may be converted and be an humble disciple of the Lord Jesus.' Immediately a stout, burly man arose and said, 'I am that man. I have a pious, praying wife, and this request must be for me. I want you to pray for me.' As soon as he sat down in the midst of sobs and tears, another man arose and said, 'I am that man; I have a praying wife. She prays for me. And now she asks you to pray for me.'

"Three, four, or five more arose and said, 'We want you to pray for us, too.' Thus the work went on. . . . We number now from 400 to 500 conversions."—*Ibid.* p. 140.

VOICES FROM THE FULTON-STREET PRAYER-MEETING.

"A father had three sons in distant and different parts of the country, all unconverted. He brought them to the meeting as subjects of prayer. They were prayed for as only those who believe can pray. What has been the

consequence? Three letters have been received from these three sons, who have not communicated with each other, giving an account of his own conversion.

"Another father requested prayer for a son at sea,—away in the Pacific. He was made the subject of earnest prayer. He has just returned to port. He was converted in mid-ocean, and just about the time he was prayed for. . . . He knew nothing of our prayer-meetings."—*Ibid.* *p.* 142.

"A young man from this meeting went to visit his impenitent father in Massachusetts. He took passage on the Long Island Sound steamer. He took a state-room alone, and spent nearly all the night in prayer for his unconverted father. He was borne down with a heavy burden of anxiety. He made several attempts to sleep, but sleep fled from his eyes. . . . When he arrived at his father's house the next morning, he took down the Bible, and said, 'Father, let us read a chapter in the Bible and pray.' 'Certainly,' said the father, 'you read.' After reading, to the surprise of the son, the father led off in prayer—pouring forth such fervent

prayer as he had scarcely ever heard. It was the first out-gushing of the new-born soul.

"As they rose from their knees, the son inquired, 'Father, how long since God gave you a heart to pray?'

"'I first began to pray *last night*,' he answered. 'I was awakened, and cried to God for mercy, and he has had mercy upon me.'"

"As I was coming to the meeting this morning," said the leader, "I came through Washington market. I was told by a young man belonging to the market that the revival had reached some young men there of a particular class, and pulling out a list of names, 'There,' said he, 'is a list whom we have been praying for, in different praying circles. I have carried these round to the little meetings for prayer, which we have had, and we have prayed for them one by one, and now all in this list are converted.'"—*Ibid.* p. 268.

These are marvellous facts, and go far to establish the divinity of our holy religion, yet they are only fair specimens of what has frequently occurred ever since God commanded his children to pray. We have introduced them rather than others because they are fresh,

and transpired right here among us, and are attested by living witnesses. Similar things transpired long ago. Says John Wesley, "A young man wrote from Nova Scotia in 1779, 'I saw, if I would go to heaven, I must lead a new life. But I did not know I wanted an inward change, or see the deplorable state I was in by nature, till I was at a prayer-meeting held at Mr. Oxley's. While they were praying, my heart began to throb within me, my eyes gushed out with tears, and I cried aloud for mercy, as did most that were in the room, about fourteen in number. One indeed, could not hold from laughing, when we began to cry out, but it was not long before he cried as loud as any. In a few moments it pleased God to fill Mrs. Oxley with joy unspeakable. After this, we went almost every night to Mr. Oxley's to sing and pray. Going there one night, and seeing the northern lights, I thought, What if the day of judgment be coming? I threw myself down on the ground and cried for mercy. On Sunday, Mr. Wells, an old Methodist, came to Amherst and gave us an exhortation, in which he said, "Sin and repent, sin and repent, till you repent in the bottomless pit." The words

went like a dagger to my heart ; and I continued mourning after God for five weeks and four days, till our monthly meeting. I was then strongly tempted to put an end to my life; but God enabled me to resist the temptation. Two days after, an old Methodist, after praying with me, said, "I think you will get the blessing before morning." About two hours after, while we were singing a hymn, it pleased God to reveal his Son in my heart. Since that time I have had many blessed days, and many happy nights.

"'One Sunday night, after my brother Dicky had gone to bed, I asked him, "Can you believe?" He answered, "No." I exhorted him to wrestle hard with God, and got up to pray with him. But he was unbelieving still. So I went to sleep. Yet not being satisfied, after talking largely to him, I got up again, and began praying for him ; being fully pursuaded that God would set his soul at liberty. And so he did, —he pardoned all his sins, and bade him go in peace.

"'It being now between twelve and one, I waked my brothers John and Thomas, and told them the glad tidings. They got up. We

went to prayer; and when we arose from our knees Tommy declared, "God has blotted out all my sins." I then went to my father and mother and told them the joyful news. My father said, "Willy, pray for us." I did, and earnestly exhorted him to wrestle with God for himself. So he did, and it was not long before God set his soul also at liberty. The next morning, it pleased him to show my sister Sally his pardoning love. Blessed be his name for all his benefits.

"'Not long after, Mr. Oxley's son came to our house. After I had talked to him a little while, the Lord laid his hand upon him in a wonderful manner, so that he roared as in the agonies of death. But between one and two in the morning, he, likewise, could rejoice in God his Saviour. These are a few of the wonderful works of God among us.'"—*Wesley's Works, vol.* 4, *p.* 558.

How many Christians, even, find it hard to believe that such experiences are real conversions! Many seem to think that sinners need to reform moderately, and grow gradually into religion, in order to become stable Christians; and they have little confidence in these sudden

changes. Yet the writer of this letter, William Black, became an able minister of the gospel, and accomplished a great work for God; and those whom he brought to Christ lived to prove that the change effected in them so suddenly, was radical,—the genuine "*new* birth."

This statement suggests, too, the utility of encouraging seekers to pray for themselves. Young Black urged his father to do this. Herein he went a little farther than some good people deem it proper to go. Yet, as a matter of fact, many who were prayed for long and earnestly found no relief until they prayed vocally for themselves, in the assembly of the saints. There are cases in which this seems to be indispensable to success.

It is hardly necessary to say more on this subject, because there are so many living witnesses to the power of prayer in every community. We will only add a single fact connected with the history of Rev. Mr. Earle, the evangelist, the like of which has come within the knowledge of many living men. It is as follows:—

"One evening after a sermon, an opportunity was given for remarks, when a lawyer of influ-

ence arose and said, 'I have often heard of the power of prayer, and I don't believe one word of it; but if you want to take a hard case, take me.' Mr. Earl asked him to come to the front seat, when they would pray for him. He replied, 'I will do nothing of the kind; but if you have power in prayer, try it on me.' Before the close of the meeting, Mr. Earle requested them all to go to their closets at a special time, and pray for Mr. O.; and wished him to remember, that they were praying for him. On the third evening after, Mr. O. was present seeking for mercy. Soon he was rejoicing in Christ. His law books were sold, and he is now an eminent minister of the gospel."—*Cyclopedia of Illustrations.*

Prayers, proposed by recent skeptics, who "would not believe though one should rise from the dead," are not *fair tests.* The promises of God do not authorize such experiments. If they will repent, and come to Christ in the way in which he has prescribed, they shall *know* that "the Lord is nigh unto all who call upon him in truth." Or, if they will accept any of *the* propositions of his word, and comply with the conditions, we will risk the result; but he has

not committed himself to be tried by the plans of his enemies. They are of the spirit and character of that of the chief priests, who said of Jesus, "mocking," "If he be the King of Israel, let him come down from the cross, and we will believe him." (Matt. xxvi. 42.)

CHAPTER XVI.

WHAT TWO FASHIONABLE YOUNG MEN OF NEW YORK CITY LEARNED ON THE SUBJECT BY PERSONAL EXPERIENCE.

OUR next witness is a young man of New York, whose early life was spent in fashion and pleasure. He was accounted amiable, moral and respectable, and was well informed in the light literature of the day. But he was strongly prejudiced against Christians,—gloried in his superior intelligence and moral uprightness, and stood aloof from spiritual assemblies. He is, therefore, a fair representative of a large class of people, who are generally unapproachable, except by formalists, who cannot lead them to Christ, because they themselves are ignorant of what that involves, both as to its means and ends.

By some providence, more likely curiosity than anything else, he one evening strayed into the famous Fulton-street prayer-meeting, where he was arrested by the Spirit of God, and afterward converted. According to his

own showing, the meeting set him to thinking. "I never did think seriously," he says, "if I could help it. I must think now, for I cannot help it. How came I to be so unwise as to consent to go to that prayer-meeting? I have before been invited and politely declined to patronize such a place and such an object. It is enough for me to patronize the church sometimes—not often. My life has been one that has admitted very little church going. I have had all I could do on Sunday to get ready for Monday. I have travelled all over the world and all round the globe, and ever have I made it a rule to let religion alone. A merry, gay life is the life for me. My wife, good soul, often wishes me to be a Christian. But, at my time of life, to think of turning saint—why, it is all preposterous. To think that I, who surely may consider myself better than most Christians, should turn psalm-singer, and be held up as an example of early piety, is most ridiculous and absurd. Yet I am here—wide awake after hours of effort to get myself to sleep—and yet the later it grows the farther sleep flees from my eyes.

"That was a wonderful prayer-meeting to-

night—never saw anything like it—never heard such prayers in all my life. It was a medley of all sorts of Christians, and all to *pray*, how earnestly to pray. I wonder when I have prayed. I never pray—never *have* prayed—if those prayed to-night—never. I should suppose that they thought to take heaven by storm. They expect to have the things they pray for, that is very evident. I never prayed in that way they did to-night, I am sure, yet if I were condemned to die, it may be I should beg for my life, much as they begged for me. I knew not one soul there, save the friend I went with, and yet they prayed for me, just as if they had known me all my days, and had known all my manner of life. Who told them? Not my friend, for he did not leave me a moment. Who told them? They confessed me to be just what I knew myself to be, a very wicked man.

"Twenty-five years ago to-night my mother went to heaven, my beautiful, blessed mother, and I have been alone, tossed up and down upon the billows of life's tempestuous ocean!

"Shall I ever go to heaven? She told me I must meet her in heaven. When she took my

boy's hand in hers, and turned her gentle, loving eyes on me, and gazed earnestly and long into my face, and then lifted them to heaven; in that last prayer, she prayed that I might meet her in heaven. I wonder if I ever shall!

"Will this night never wear away? If I see the light again, shall I ever see another such happy day as I have seen? I am not happy—I have not been since I went into *that* prayer-meeting. I am miserable. *What a wretch I have been*—a wretch.

"My mother's prayers! oh! my sweet, blessed mother's prayers. Did ever boy have such a mother as I had? For twenty-five years I have not heard her pray, till *to-night* I have heard *all her prayers over again.* They have had in fact a terrible resurrection. Oh! how she was wont to pray. She prayed as they prayed to-night—so earnest, so importunate, so believing. I really believe *she expected* me to be a Christian. Shall I ever be a Christian? *She* was a Christian. Oh! how bright, and pure, and happy was her life. She was a cheerful, happy Christian. . . .

"There is my mother's Bible: I have not opened it for years. Did she believe I could

ever neglect her precious, very precious Bible so? She surely thought I would read it much and often. How often has she read it to me? How did she cause me to kneel by my little bed, and put my little hands up in the attitude of prayer? How has she kneeled by me, and over me, and I have felt her warm tears raining down upon my hands and face. Blessed mother! Did you pray in vain for your darling boy? It shall not be in vain! Oh! no! no! no, it *shall* not be in vain. I *will* pray for myself. If she were only here, to pray once more for me, how happy I should be. I pray? *I pray?* I know not *how* to pray. It will be a mockery. They *prayed* in the prayer-meeting to-night. My heart said that *was prayer.* Can I not ask them to pray *for* me? to pray *with* me? If they could pray for me, without asking—as they prayed to-night—how much more when they see me come and make the special request that they will pray for *me!* Yes, *me.*

"They meet to-morrow noon to pray. That mid-day hour I will give to prayer. I will ask them to pray. Will it ever come? Oh, God! be merciful to me a sinner. . . .

"Shall my mind ever have relief? How can I endure this anguish? Morning is come. I hear the family astir. But alas! it is no morning to me! The gladness is all gone out of my soul. I turn my despairing eyes every way for relief, but none comes. I *pray*—I am shut up—I cannot pray. . . . I will go again to-day; I will ask them if they can pray for a wretch like me, who have never prayed in all my life, but as the Pharisee, thanking God that I am not like other men. I surely am not like other men, for who has been so hardened as I have been? Who has sinned against so much instruction as I have?—against so many precious prayers put up to heaven for me, by one of the most lovely, tender, pious, confiding, trusting of mothers in her Heavenly Father's care and grace. She never doubted—she believed. She always prayed as if she did. So they do at this Union prayer-meeting. I must go there to-day—I will go there. No power on earth or in hell shall stop me. . . .

"Oh, if God will only have mercy on my poor soul? I have besought him to remove all the obstacles, and take them out of the way, and teach me by his Holy Spirit, how to come to

Jesus as a Saviour. I have never thought much of Christ—never understood his office, work and character. If he is the only Saviour, I *must* understand it. I have no ability of my own; no righteousness of my own. I am as an unclean thing, and my righteousness as filthy rags. I assent to the truth because it *is* true, and I *must*. It is of no use to hide the truth from myself. My Bible—my mother's Bible—and my conscience, teach me what I am, and what I have made myself. Oh, the bitter pangs of an accusing conscience! Oh! the unspeakable anguish of the heart that cannot speak one word for itself! I need a Saviour—mighty to save. I must seek him—I will. I am on the sea of existence, and I never can get off from it. I am afloat—no anchor, no rudder, no compass, no book of directions—for I have put them all far from me. What a thoughtless, guilty, suicidal creature I have been, dancing upon the edge of an awful precipice, my very 'feet taking hold on hell.' God of mercy save! Saviour of the perishing, save, or I perish.

"It is time. The noon-tide hour—the blessed hour of prayer. Oh, that they would pray for me to-day. I shall ask them—I must.

I shall say: Oh, pray for me, a poor, miserable, self-ruined wretch as I am.". . .

How hard it is for the proud, conceited sinner to ask for prayers! But there is no relief without it, where there is opportunity. This young man did so, and it was not in vain. He was right. He was in earnest. It could do no harm and might help him. Others had been blest by this means, and who could say he would not be? Prayer, fervent prayer was offered. He prayed for himself, confessed his sins, and begged for mercy, like any poor wicked publican, Pharisee as he was, and God answered. The next day he stood up in the Union prayer-meeting and said with deep emotion:

"My brethren! I stand before you, a monument of God's amazing mercy and goodness. Yesterday you were asked to pray for me; today I come to join you in ascriptions of praise to Him who saves sinners by his grace. I stand here to tell you that the Lord has put a new song into my mouth. I praise him with my whole heart for what he has done for me. Oh! such a blind, ruined, self-righteous sinner as I was but two days ago, when I came into the

first prayer-meeting. I have been the world over. I have seen everything worthy of being seen, but I never saw such a prayer-meeting as this; and glory be to God, for ever bringing me in his mercy to this place of prayer, for here he met me. Here the bandages were stripped from my eyes, and I stood out before myself, naked in my own deformity. Here I saw the inside of the whitened sepulchre, full of all uncleanness. Oh, what a sinner I have been! But the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin. Yes, forever blessed be his holy name, that I can feel that his blood *avails* for me. I will praise him, oh, I will praise him, while I have my being. All I have and all I am I consecrate to Jesus, my Saviour, my God. I love him with a love that is all unutterable. Oh! if I had words to tell it! But words are too poor to tell the love I feel. He is unspeakably precious to me. The walls of this room are precious to me—the very floor, too, on which I stand. How can I ever forget this precious place of prayer? How dear to me is this little band of brothers and sisters, who bore up my case to the throne of heavenly grace! Here mercy found me—here mercy was extended to

me—here the Saviour first revealed himself to me. Oh! how precious!"—*The Power of Prayer.*

What encouragement is here for mothers to pray for their children! They may become wild, and even reckless, and adopt the most fatal forms of skepticism, but they will never forget their mother's prayers.

"The mother in her office holds the key
Of the soul; and she it is who stamps the coin
Of character, and makes the being, who would be a savage
But for her gentle cares, a Christian man."

The following lines of William Cowper express the tender memories of many wandering sons:

"My mother! when I learned that thou wast dead,
Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?
Hovered thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son—
Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?
Perhaps thou gavest me, though unfelt, a kiss;
Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss—
Oh, that maternal smile! it answers, Yes.
I heard the bell tolled on thy burial day;
I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away;
And, turning from my nursery window, drew
A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu!
But was it such? It was. Where thou art gone
Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown.
May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,
The parting word shall pass my lips no more."

ANOTHER CASE OF THE KIND.

Another young man of wealth and high social position, discovered by some means that he was a sinner, and sought the Lord with all his heart. In one of the revival meetings his burden was removed, and he rejoiced in the Saviour's love. On his way home that evening, he resolved to let his light shine in his family, where *frivolity* had previously reigned. That meant family prayer. But his dear wife was as far from religion as he had been, and his sister, living with him, was entirely immersed in gayety and fashionable folly, so that he was likely to find no help in the undertaking, and, perhaps, serious opposition. How he succeeded will appear in the following statement:—

"'O no,' said the tempter, 'not yet. Don't be in a hurry. Take time. Get a little stronger, and then you can go on better.'

"'No, I must begin to-night. I do not know what my wife and sister will say; but it is a duty, and I am resolved to do it, and trust God for the rest. I must pray in my family.'

"'Not to-night,' said the tempter; 'you don't know how to pray. You have never

prayed much. You are unacquainted with the language of prayer. Wait and learn how first.'

"'No, no, I *must* pray to-night, I will pray to-night. Get thee behind me, Satan.'

"He passed into his dwelling, and into his library, and there, before God, his heavenly Father, and in the name of the Lord Jesus, he poured out his heart and asked for strength and grace from on high to assist him in his duty.

"When he met his wife that evening, she saw at once that a great change had taken place in him, and she saw it with awe, but said nothing. At length he said:

"'My dear wife, would you have any objections to our having family worship?'

"After a moment's surprise and hesitation she said with true politness:

"'Certainly not, if it is your pleasure.'

"'Bring me a Bible then, please, and draw up under the gas-light, and let us read and pray.'

"He read a chapter, and then kneeled down, but his wife and sister sat upright in their seats, and he felt that he was alone on his knees. He lifted up his eyes to God, and cried out in the bitterness of his soul, 'God be merciful to me

a sinner.' And gathering strength, he went on in his prayer, pouring out his most earnest cries and supplication that God would have mercy on his beloved wife and sister. So earnest, so importunate was that prayer that God would show his converting grace and power on the spot, that the heart of his wife was melted and overcome, and she slipped from her seat upon her knees beside him, and putting her arms around his neck, ere she was aware, she burst out into one agonizing cry to the Lord Jesus for mercy on her soul ; and then the sister knelt down on his other side, and she, too, put her arms around him, and burst into a flood of tears.

"He continued to pray ; he devoted himself and those with him to God. He confessed and bewailed his and their manner of life hitherto ; he pleaded the promises of God to all those that seek him, and with unspeakable joy he made mention of the amazing grace of God in the pardon of his sins, and he besought that they all might find and obtain together peace and forgiveness through a crucified Saviour.

"The submission was complete ; the surrender fully made ; repentance and faith sprang

up together in the hearts of all the three, and as they rose from their knees, it was to acknowledge each to the other what new determinations and resolutions and consecration they each had made during the progress of *that first prayer in the family, in that parlor*, of all they were and all they wanted to be, or should be to Christ."—*The Power of Prayer*, p. 131.

That was the beginning of a new life on gospel principles. Their old loved, sinful modes of pleasure, lost all their charms in an instant, and a new and singular passion for God and his service took possession of their souls. Was it not a *miracle?* Who ever knew of anything like it outside of Christianity?

CHAPTER XVII.

THE LATE TESTIMONY OF A GERMAN ATHEIST.

WE add this to the thrilling experiences already recorded, because of its intrinsic value in several particulars incidental to our main object. The reader cannot fail to be interested in General Albright and his wife, who figured so beautifully in the means employed. We commend their pious example to all who may have opportunity to imitate it.

REV. F. VON SCHLUEMBACH

was born of a noble family in Southern Germany. He was raised in luxury, being educated by Prince Frederick of Hohenlohe. He early entered the army as a cadet, and became a spendthrift and a drunkard. In 1859 he resigned his position and came to America. He soon connected himself with the "*Turners' Association*," embracing in its platform, "There is no God," and soon arose to be a leader, and concerted with his comrades to reform the country on the basis of infidelity. He says, "My life became more and more mis-

erable, and I was in my heart an atheist. . . . I hated Christianity from the bottom of my heart. I considered everybody a fool that would go to church. . . . I could not go by a lager-beer saloon without going in."

We will not give all the details of his miserable existence, but come directly to the wonderful change which transpired in him,

AND THE MEANS OF ITS ACCOMPLISHMENT.

He says, "I was invited to go to Philadelphia and give a lecture on the subject, 'There is no God.' The next morning after the lecture I had business in Mauch Chunk, Pa. As I walked through the cars on the way up, a gentleman pulled my coat. I turned around, and found General Albright, my old general in the army, who died a short time since. Said he, 'I am very glad to see you. Where are you going?' 'To Mauch Chunk,' I replied. We had a little conversation, and the General said, 'Will you stop over and dine with me this afternoon?' 'I'll gladly do so,' I said, 'when I have done with my business.' 'We dine at four o'clock. My good wife hasn't seen you for ever so long.' After further conversation, said

he to me, 'Captain, let me ask you a question!' 'Of course,' said I, 'of course.' 'Do you love the Lord Jesus Christ?' 'Why, General,' said I, 'I hate, I hate that miserable Jew, and I consider everybody a fool who believes in him.' He said, 'Captain, you must reckon me a fool, then.' I said, 'Present company always excepted.' He said, 'I don't want to be excepted. I love the Lord Jesus, and I'll own it.' I was very much embarrassed. I didn't wish to see the General's home. I said, 'I guess it will spoil our dinner.' 'Oh, no,' said he, 'that's not Christian. I want you to understand that you are as heartily welcome as you were five minutes ago. But I am really sorry you are not a Christian.'

"We arrived at Mauch Chunk, and at four o'clock I stepped up to his office. He greeted me and said, 'We will soon be called to dinner.' A few minutes passed, and Mrs. Albright came in. The General said, 'Mrs. Albright, do you recognize this gentleman?' 'No, I don't recollect him.' 'This is my infidel friend, Captain Schluembach.' I said, 'That's hardly fair.' She said, 'Are *you* an infidel?' 'I am an atheist,' I replied. Pretty soon it was

announced that the dinner was ready. Mrs. Albright turned round and said, 'Permit me to introduce to you Reverend ——.' 'Oh, Reverend!' I said. 'How does the Reverend come here? We German infidels call them *Pfarrer*.' I had often said I would not dine with a preacher. I looked at the preacher with disgust. The General and preacher commenced to talk about Christianity, and I thought I would keep back, but soon the young preacher got warmed up. I thought he was a coward. He went for me in fair style, but he made a most sad mistake, that poor young man! He had been to college, and he selected just what I would have selected to fight him. He talked about the philosophy of Christianity. I liked that first-rate. I thought I would go back and find out about the first principles of Christianity, and when I found what I had before me I went into him. I forgot about dinner.

"After a time the General and the preacher went away, but Mrs. Albright would not let me go. She brought the cup of coffee, and said, 'Now, Captain, you made a few remarks a little while ago, and I did not like them. You remarked something that was very wrong.'

'Wrong, Madam?' said I. 'Yes,' said she. 'I don't know anything about philosophy, but you charged something that was very wrong indeed.' Thus I was drawn into conversation with the lady on Christianity. She said, 'You wanted to reform this country; you felt in earnest about it, and that it couldn't get along except it be infidel, and that Christianity was a stumbling-block in the furtherance of this country. If you can find out in history that you are right, I will give in. Let us have a little comparison—compare notes, and see what Christianity has done for the land and for the world, and what infidelity has done for the land and the world.' I said, 'That's business!' and we did go in.

"I found that I had reckoned without my host. I found that she was a very tenacious American lady. She would not let go. She said, 'Let us look a little.' She quoted history. She had been to school. I made a statement. She said, 'Do you claim that on your side? Far away back here this has been brought forward by Christian statesmen and Christian philosophers.' And I had to own up that she was right. And she made me a counter-charge con-

cerning state prisons and orphan asylums, and she said, 'Christianity dosen't make any orphans to be dependent on the public. Christians can take care of their orphans. The Christian Church can protect all of them, and the Christian generally saves much more money than the drinking class; but the State has to take care of the children of the drunkards and of the infidels.' And so I found out that when we settled our accounts I had a great many ciphers, and she had a great many figures, and I considered myself very well whipped, and whipped, too, by a woman who was smart. I didn't acknowledge it, but she had put in some good, solid facts.

"While we were conversing, I learned that my train had left. It was Saturday night, and I could not get home until Monday morning—and there I was with that woman before me. I said, 'Madam, you are at fault that I cannot go home.' She said, 'You would better stay here until Monday, and promise me that you will go to church.' 'O, no, madam,' said I. 'O,' said she, 'you are honest and fair, and now you must go to church, and judge Christianity. Go and judge.' I thought that was

pretty good logic, and so I said, 'I will go.' 'And, by the way,' said she, 'you must promise me that you will go to Sunday-school.' 'What's that?' 'Have you not been into a Sunday-school?' 'No,' said I, 'I've never been into a Sunday-school. I don't believe in Sunday-schools. Well, I can promise.' And I promised, and went home to the hotel.

"When I entered the hotel, I sat down to muse. I had nothing else to do but to muse. I said to myself, 'You have made a fool of yourself.' It was the first acknowledgment of the fact to myself. It was hard; and one thought chased another, and one minute chased another, and time went by, and my agony commenced to be unbearable. The more I thought over her sayings, the more I found that the woman had spoken truth after truth that I never had dreamed about, that I never had investigated, but had talked to people while I never really, personally, with unprejudiced heart, had watched the Bible and its teachings. I felt ashamed, and I went from one terror to another, and it was really a terrible position in my life. I had to acknowledge for the first time in my life that Christianity was right and

infidelity was wrong, and that all my misery came because I was on the wrong side. The suggestion came, 'You would better be a Christian!' I said, 'Never! Never!' I commenced to get mad. I was so angry that I wanted to run my brains against the rock. I had to acknowledge that I didn't want to go right, or else must become a Christian, and wouldn't. No, indeed! I had said, a short time before, that the day my friends should hear that I had become a Christian they might call me 'Scoundrel.' They *did* do it; and they have me as a 'scoundrel' on their books to-day. And I would rather have it there as scoundrel, and my name entered in heaven, than to have it struck out of heaven, and entered there in honor.

"I came to the conclusion that I had arrived at the point where Schopenhauer teaches that if a man is sick of life he should end it. I knew that if I commenced to think of wife and relatives I could not stand it. I would end all my agony. Forty-five feet below me was the river and the rocks. I would jump into it, and it would be all up then. I jumped on the sill of the window. In that moment, when I didn't

know what to do, because infidelity seemed to be wrong and Christianity partially right, so that I was perfectly miserable—in that moment when I wanted to end my life in suicide, a voice said, 'Don't make another fool of yourself. What are you going to jump for?' 'I'm tired of life. I never will be a Christian, never! And I can't be a dishonest man. I find I am wrong, and I will not accept the right, and I can't give up these principles of philosophy.' It loomed up like mountains—the idea that the woman was right. There is a ray. A voice commenced to talk: 'I will help you out of it.' No help for me! I quoted several stanzas of philosophy. I can hear the voice now as it spoke to me then: 'Frederick, get drunk!' That was like a flash of lightning. 'Get drunk!' I thought, if I am drunk I cannot go to church, and when Monday comes I can go home. You can imagine how hard my heart was. A moment before I was all in consternation because soberly thinking of the matter concerning my soul. Now I was in my old school. 'Get drunk!' I went to bed. I didn't sleep much. I rose in the morning. I didn't desire to eat. You know you don't get drunk by eating, but by drinking.

I went out and found a saloon kept by a friend of mine. He said, 'You are very early, Fred. Fill up! Have a drink!' I thought I would start with beer, and then put whiskey on. I said, 'I'll take a glass.' When we got the beer we lifted it up to drink together, and as it came near my nose there was a terrible stench from it. What a horrible drink! It was dreadful. I could not drink it for all the world. He drank his off and professed it was splendid. I didn't want to say it was bad; he would have been mad. I set it down. I said I was not feeling well. I paid for my beer, but I could not drink it.

"I then went out on the street. I meditated a little while; and as I was meditating, the church bells rang. I went to church. The sermon didn't do me a bit of good. An old gentleman preached, and he seemed to care very little about Christianity. He described all the wheels of a cotton-factory and how the people worked. And I thought. I looked at Mrs. Albright next to me, and I got stubborn in my heart. She said to me, 'Don't forget that you promised to go to Sunday-school.' She said, 'This sermon is not a model sermon.'

I went up to the church at the proper time, and as I approached the door I heard the sweet songs of the children, and they captivated me. I opened the door, and stood in the presence of Mrs. Albright, with about two or three hundred girls and boys. You call that the infant class. They all looked. When the song was over, she came up to me and said, 'Here is a dear friend of the General. Now you will sing a song for him.' It turned my heart upside down, and I had to do all I could to fight my feelings so that I should not weep. She said, 'Now, children, you must show the Captain, my friend, what you have learned. Do you know the twenty-third Psalm?' 'Oh, yes.' She came and gave me the Bible. She said, 'Captain, I want you to take the Bible; you must see that they don't skip a word.' I took the Bible, and they recited: 'The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.' They went on, verse after verse. I became perfectly astounded at those little girls and boys. This is wonderful—how these Christians take care of the children. That pleased me. And I had always boasted of reform—that we must reform. They commenced to sing again, and when they

started, I cried. They commenced to look to see that big Dutchman cry. It was awful. I felt ashamed, and got up and started to go. Mrs. Albright said to me, 'Captain, do go to the Sunday-school.' 'Go to the Sunday-school?' 'Yes,' said she, 'the General is waiting for you.' I hesitated, took out my handkerchief, and felt miserable and ashamed of myself; but I went around to see the Sunday-school, and I was astonished. I found a large congregation that surprised me. When I entered, the General ran down the aisle and said to me, 'Very glad to see you in an American Sunday-school.' I looked around and said, 'That's nice—splendid.' He said, 'That's our library.' I thought it was beautiful, and investigated it a little. I thought I would better face the books than the people.

"While I was standing there and looking, the General tapped the bell and said, 'Put away your books. Here is my infidel friend, Captain von Schluembach, who will address you on the topic, "There is no God."' Everybody then began to laugh. I thought that was horrible, but as I had said before, and even in public, that if I could only enter the Christian

church, and they would let me into the pulpit, I would like to tell the people what fools they were ; and now that I had the best opportunity to do it, I felt ashamed that the man had said so. They sang ; and I commenced to weep again, because the music broke my heart down. It reminded me of my home, and I felt ashamed that I stood there in that way. The night before came up before me, and it spoke in my heart, 'You honor justice, you honor the light.' It was a terrible moment. The blood rushed to my face. The General introduced me to the audience. I stepped up to speak. All I could say was this : 'I am an atheist and an infidel, and I have been; but I am honest to tell you that since yesterday things have changed with me. I ask you, if you really *know* that there is a God, if you really *know* what you say to be a truth, please pray for me that your God may reveal himself to me ; and if he is a God I will serve him.' They sang another hymn and prayed for me. Not a word was said on religion. The preacher was there. I did not hate him any more.

"We went home. It was a beautiful afternoon in August, 1868. Mrs. Albright said,

'Come up to the porch. There is a request I have to make of you. I want to go to Germany with my husband next year, and I do love to hear of the Fatherland.' We sat up on that porch, in the beautiful surroundings of the American Switzerland, and she spoke to me of the great, sweet Voice, and finally I spoke very long. I told her the enjoyments of life, and at last I came to speak about home. All at once she stopped me. 'O,' she said, 'Captain, I don't want to interrupt, but I desire to ask you a question: Was your mother an infidel woman, too?' That was enough; that simple question broke me down. I at once knew what a horrible man I was. Let me tell you at this moment.

"When I left home on the 13th of December, 1859, I left a dying mother. My father telegraphed me at two o'clock in the morning, 'Come home. Mother is dying.' I telegraphed back, 'I am going to America.' On the early morning train another dispatch came: 'Fred, everything forgiven and forgotten. Mother is dying.' I telegraphed home, 'Too late!' That is all I telegraphed. My father had that nailed over my bed, and he said, 'That shall not come

down from the bed;' and it did not till the day I arrived in 1875 in the fall, and said to him, 'Father, forgive me.' And he said, 'It is all forgiven, my boy, my boy!' But *then* there was a message that came to America from my dying mother. It was this from my father, 'You have driven the nail in mother's coffin; you have broken your father's heart with your debaucheries; but mother sends you this word, "Fred, never forget the Lord Jesus Christ."'

"Mrs. Albright had asked me 'Was your mother an infidel?' But that dear mother in her dying moments requested me to love the Lord Jesus Christ, and her prayer was ascending for her boy. I wept; I broke down. After a long time, the dear lady said, 'It is night, won't you go to church? Wash up and go.' And we went over to East Mauch Chunk, a little village, and there in a little chapel the young man, the minister, was preaching the gospel. When we entered it (it was a dark school-house) there were the miners in their shirt-sleeves, and others who were well-dressed, and I was astonished that such a mixed audience would come into the church. The

young man gave out a hymn, and then I heard the first sermon about 'Jesus and his love.' He spoke what the Lord had put on his tongue out of the Bible. He showed there was a God. I wondered who told him about me. How he put himself in my heart with the word of God! And I watched him. How I drank in every word that man said; and when he opened out there was a just God, and there was a holy God, and a God that hates sin, I commenced to be full of wonder. I found that I was in a terrible position. I found that God in his mercy had stretched out his hand to every one that would accept him. I thought that was good. And I watched for Jesus, and I wanted to get up and ask the man where that Jesus was to be had. I could not understand how he could preach so. But the man received the gospel from on high, and the Spirit told him what to say. He told me that I could be saved now, and I jumped at it, as a hungry fish jumps at the bait, and I said, 'Lord, if there is truth, save me!' And he did save me. When I came down before him, a broken-down sinner, who knew no other help but the divine Saviour, right there he took my heart away from me,

that miserable stony heart, and put in a new one that loves him.

"It is twelve years ago, and here I tell you that I praise the Lord to-night that he accepted me, a poor sinner, right there. I had to go through a great deal of persecution. The next day the whole world rose up—the political enemies and organs, the newspapers, the Germans—against me. I was so happy I did not care if the whole world called me a fool. They charged me with taking $10,000 to become a Christian; but I have got a whole heaven, worth more than everything in America. I knew what I had found. Christianity was not a dogma. I did not learn it in a theoretical school. I had found my Saviour, a present Saviour, a power in the moment of trial, a power in the moment of persecution.

"Two weeks ago last Sabbath I stood in the midst of my old colleagues, in the city of Wilkesbarre. I invited them to come out and hear the gospel. I stood in the hall I had dedicated by the fancy dress ball when I was chief leader, on that spot inaugurated by a blasphemous atheistic speech—stood there by the permission of the owner—and proclaimed Jesus

Christ to the men and women with whom I had been in contact as atheists and infidels. Praise the Lord that the men who had bawled at me on the open street, came up and shook me by the hand, and acknowledged that the Lord God was good to the sinner!

"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, because I know what he does for a poor sinner. I know that he took me away from a drunkard's grave to the abodes of sobriety. My Lord has taken away from me all desire and taste for drink. I know how drink tastes. I can taste whiskey, or champagne, if you please, but I have no desire, no more desire for it than I would to commit murder.

"I praise the Lord in my inmost heart to know that every moment of my life he speaks to me. If I am in difficulty or trouble he speaks to me, he comes to me, he gives me his voice, wheresoever I am in danger. What else shall I say but, 'Praise the Lord, O my soul!' not because others tell me to do it, but because my heart tells me I would be ungrateful if I did not honor Jesus, and that he cares for us, for the world, for the lowest sinner such

as I was. He gave himself to me as my power and strength.

"If there is a soul here who is encircled and involved by the iron arms of infidelity or the terrible slavery of the intoxicating cup, let me say to you—in the name of him who called to me, 'My son, give me thy heart'—come, and give thy heart to him to-night! And if any soul is willing to come, the response will be, 'I have begotten thee. Thou art mine.' You will find that faith is honored of God. Come into personal union with your Master, God. Believe him. The blessing is so great that I cannot understand how a soul can stay away. I could not go away from Jesus, because he is so good to me, so sweet, so loving, *so* loving and yet so strong, that all I am, I am in Jesus. Oh, may God bless you, that you may see the Saviour, as I do, in your heart, living and working forever!"—*Zion's Herald*, Boston, Nov. 11, 1880.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MATURITY IN CHRISTIAN CHARACTER, SOMETIMES CALLED "THE HIGHER LIFE," ATTESTED BY EXPERIENCE.

THE experiences thus far given relate chiefly to justification by faith and its accompaniments, regeneration, or the new birth; and adoption into the family of saints. This double work so changes the character and relations of sinners, that they are properly called children of God. But they are *only* children ordinarily, because they know little of the plan of salvation beyond what they have experienced, less of temptations and trials, and no more, perhaps, of the possibility of growth in the elements of the new life upon which they have entered. St. Paul represents them as "babes in Christ." (1 Cor. iii. 1.) Writing to certain believers who had not improved their opportunities, he says, "When for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and

are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe." (Heb. v. 12, 13.)

The will of God with regard to those who have been converted, is, that they "grow in grace." The Scriptures are explicit on this point, as may be seen from the following selections:—

"The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger." (Job xvii. 9.)

"And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season." (Psa. i. 3.)

"The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." (Prov. iv. 18.)

"Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall." (Mal. iv. 2.)

"Besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness;

and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity." (2 Peter i. 5–7.)

The extent of this growth and improvement under the gospel is far-reaching, comprehending a thorough cleansing from all unrighteousness. (1 John i. 9.) Its completeness may be inferred from the following quotations:—

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matt. v. 48.) "The disciple is not above his master; but every one that is perfect shall be as his master." (Luke vi. 40.)

This does not mean, of course, that we may be absolutely perfect, for God only is perfect in that sense, but that we shall be perfect in our measure. And how much this implies is fairly indicated by the prayers of St. Paul, in these sweeping words:—

"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thess. v. 23.) And,

"For this cause, I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ... that he would grant you, according to the riches of his

glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God." (Eph. iii. 14–19.)

This state is further represented by St. John, the most intimate of Christ's friends,—who says:—

"If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight." (1 John iii. 21, 22.)

It is also comprehended in the emphatic exhortation of Paul, "See that none render evil for evil unto any *man;* but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all *men.* Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."

Considering the depravity of the human

heart, and the low standard of religion which has prevailed in the churches, these high attainments seem quite impracticable, but experience has demonstrated that they are not. Complete consecration to God, accompanied by a corresponding faith in the atonement made by Christ, uniformly brings complete salvation. We present a few experiences of this class from different denominations, to demonstrate the fact, and illustrate the greatness of our privileges under the gospel. The details, it will be perceived, are not precisely the same, some having advanced from their spiritual birth right into maturity, while others lingered by the way, until they were awakened to see their deficiences.

The first case to which attention is asked, is that of a young man in college, who had been endeavoring to be a Christian and to do good as he had opportunity, but conscious of imperfection in his consecration and life. He says :—

"Feb. 17th and 18th.—Felt convicted of remains of sin in my heart, and deeply convinced of my need of holiness. Prayed for it, yet in vain ; and perhaps not entirely in vain, for prayer increased my confidence and quickened

my expectation. Felt willing to give up all, and to do anything to obtain the blessing: yes, longed to do some *great thing*—to *commit* myself thoroughly to the search. Could I obtain the blessing by going twenty miles, where I might join with people praying for it, gladly would I go. But O! it is by FAITH, and not by *works;* by GRACE, and not by *merits*. It is only to wash in the Jordan of Christ's blood, and be cleansed from the leprosy of sin.

"Evening of the 18th.—Attended class-meeting at S——. H——. Went with strong desires for the blessing: nor were they *barren* desires; for a strong degree of *expectation* accompanied them. In this they all differed from my previous desires. Class full, and full of spirit. The meeting progressed so joyfully, that in the spirit of the meeting, while participating the joy of others, I lost all thoughts of sanctification; at least, I did not make it the definite object of search, and the subject of wrestling prayer, as I intended. In this I was disappointed, and, when called to speak at the close of the class, could not conceal my disappointment. Humbly acknowledged my need and desire of being perfected in love, and my

expectation that the work would have been wrought that evening. 'Well,' replied the leader, 'it is not too late yet.' I cast my eye upon the clock—it was but eight; I took him at his word, fell on my knees and began to pray. I prayed sincerely with increasing faith and fervency. Feeling that matters were verging to a crisis, and that what was done must be accomplished that evening, I *prayed* till there was cause to *praise*. I got sight of the blessing, and felt willing to receive it by *faith*, and to receive it *then*. I crowded all that I was, or had, or was expecting to have, my interests for time and eternity, upon the altar, and, sprinkled with atoning merit, I felt that my little all was all that was required, and was accepted. The blessing was before me, and the time to take it had arrived. Here, where my confidence and spirit had before failed, and a spirit of trembling possessed me, my faith sustained me. Feeling, as heretofore, that I was willing to be saved, I felt to go a little further, and exclaimed, I am ready! I am waiting! The fullness of the promise assured me that God was ever on the giving hand—willing, ready, waiting; this reduced it

to the *present tense.* Here infinite benevolence met the suppliant, and 'cut short the work in righteousness.' The blessing was mine—I felt I possessed it: it made me contented. The witnessing Spirit supplanted my convictions and I experienced a deep assurance that my prayer was answered, and the blessing bestowed. A mighty comfort pervaded my heart; a mighty peace rolled through my soul. Felt *conscious* that I had given all for Christ, and felt the witness of the Spirit, like an impression on my soul that he had become 'all in all' to me.

"Then came a moment's struggle. I had a vow to perform. I had promised God, if he would grant the desire of my heart, I would profess and make it known. A moment's hesitation—the devil tempted—the flesh cautioned—it was but for a moment. Resolved to fulfill my promise, and perform my vows, I arose, like a young convert about to declare the mighty change. I said but little—my soul was full—it overflowed. All sentiments resolved themselves in *one,* and all expressions were but synonyms of *glory!* I sat down. Not a doubt lingered, not a cloud obscured. The *evidence*

then streamed in like sunlight, or rather like ceaseless undulations of glory. I had often felt sufficiently free, in religious meetings, to respond amen ! glory ! but never before had I felt it like something that MUST be uttered. 'Twas no ecstatic flight, no height of rapture ; but O ! the depth ! The fathomless depth ! The ocean of love ! 'Twas boundless billows of joy, and ceaseless swells of glory ! I went home all melted and subdued beneath this fresh manifestation of the love of my heavenly Father.

" Sunday, Feb. 19th.—I arose, and reflected on last evening's scenes. It was dream-like. I inquired of myself, ' Is it so ? ' ' can it be ? ' For a moment I trembled ; but promises of sustaining grace recurred to my mind, and made me confiding ; a thing quite unusual with me, for which I had never looked in my experience. They seemed like the oil of consolation poured on the sea of soul that had been ruffled by a little tempest. All was calm, or rather all was joy. Some parts of the day were peculiarly glorious. My cup was full to overflowing. *Love was the supreme law of the heart.*"—*Riches of Grace,* pp. 35–37.

One week later, he wrote, "The last has been the happiest week of my remembrance;" and two years after, he added, "I can heartily subscribe all that I have transcribed as the faithfulness of God, tested in earnest experience of Gospel Holiness."

REV. DANIEL STEEL, D.D.

We have here a more recent experience, which gave so much satisfaction and profit to many, when first published, that we cannot deny ourselves the pleasure of inserting it. It was addressed to a friend, the editor of *Zion's Herald*, and published in his paper without formal consent, with an introduction containing these truthful words among others, to wit:—

"The writer is one of the first scholars and writers of the Church, holding a high official position in one of our colleges, a man of great sobriety of temper and evenness of character. . . . An anthracite coal, he would be called by all his acquaintances. An anthracite coal on fire this letter shows him to be!" But we will let the brother speak for himself. He says:—

"I have experienced a most marvellous manifestation of the love of Christ to me. O the

unsearchable riches of Christ! Do you know how unspeakably precious Jesus is when you trust him fully? My experience was never marked. I never could tell the day of my conversion. My evidence was chiefly an inference, rarely the direct testimony of the Spirit. Hence my utterances have been feeble and destitute of power. But all this is gone by. God has so certified this blessed gospel to my soul that I shall no more blow the trumpet with an uncertain sound.

"Rev. Mr. Earle spent four days here a month ago. The spirit of his preaching, and his success, and his remarks at his farewell on what he styles 'the rest of faith,' set me thinking and praying, and confessing the coldness of my heart, and my satisfaction in past days with the mere perfunctory performance of Christian duty. I began to pray for the baptism of the Spirit to enable me to carry on the revival which has broken out in the village. God answered my prayer most graciously. I am at times so overwhelmed with the love of God that I cannot stand the pressure on the earthen vessel, and have to ask God to stay his hand.

"The joy is indescribable. I am a free

man in Christ Jesus—'free indeed;' free from the fear of man. I can approach any person, anywhere. I am free in my utterance. My mouth is opened, my heart is enlarged toward sinners. I can't help preaching. As the boy said of the whistle, 'it whistles itself.' Everybody is astonished at the complete and wonderful transformation through which I have passed. There is a new meaning to the hymns of Charles Wesley—especially to 'Wrestling Jacob,' which I always admitted æsthetically, but was never in experimental sympathy with. O how real the promises are! I have been treating them like our irredeemable greenbacks, not representing gold to-day, but payable in coin at some indefinite future time. I have found out to my unspeakable joy, that God never has suspended specie payment; that behind every word of promise there is gold coin in the treasury of heaven.

"I can't interpret the blessing; whether it be the second or third, it certainly is the greatest that I ever received. *It stays.* It is very strange that my mouth should be filled with laughter, and my tongue with praises—

the coolest and least demonstrative man in the Methodist Episcopal Church.

"Last Thursday, Nov. 17, I think I went where Paul did when he heard things not lawful, not possible to utter. My whole being, soul and body, was pervaded with the indescribable joy of the Holy Spirit. The nervous sensations were delicious, a thousand fold more than any I ever experienced before. I believe that on that day—though the divine influence had been descending for two weeks—my great Joshua brought me in, and allotted me a portion in the mountain of God. If I should derive my theology from my feelings, I should have to adopt one of the five points of Calvin—

> "'But this I do find, we two are so joined
> He'll not live in glory and leave me behind.'

"The same feeling appears in 'Wrestling Jacob;' after his victory he exclaims:—

> "'Nor *have I power from thee to move;*
> Thy nature and thy name is love.'"

This is a very modest statement of the facts. The subject of it did not seek the fullness of the Spirit in obedience to a preconcieved theory, but against strong prejudices. Nor did he seek it as a "*second*" or "*third*" blessing, but

rather as a necessary endowment for the work before him. The exciting cause was not argument, but the experience of another, who enjoyed the blessing, and called it "the rest of faith." We have no doubt that the same blessing is within the reach of all who will seek it. It seems to be the only proper ground for Christians to occupy. Nothing short can satisfy the human heart, when aroused to feel its own wickedness and *weakness.*

That this was a real work of the Spirit is evident from its results. A year later, the subject of it wrote,—"It is a year from this blessed 17th day of November, since,

> 'Down from on high the blessed Dove
> Did come into my breast,
> To witness God's eternal love—
> This is my constant rest.'"

Three years afterward his light was undimmed, and still he walks with God in the same blessed fellowship.—*Love Enthroned.*

Yet he is not tenacious about the name by which it shall be characterized, or its relation to other experiences, as the first, second, or third blessing; or, as to the time which shall elapse after conversion, before its full realization. But he justly insists on its being a specific work

instantaneously accomplished, like justification, yet, he kindly suggests to Christians to abandon the discussion of the questions arising from the subject, and all cry mightily to God for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This is wise. Too much time is wasted in argument about matters that can be better settled by experience. The main question is, are we thus saved? If not, let us put ourselves in the position of honest seekers, and we "shall *know* of the doctrine whether it be of God."

CHAPTER XIX.

OTHER WITNESSES TO THE TRUTH OF THE SCRIPTURES ON THIS POINT.

THE exceeding riches of divine grace must be experienced to be known and appreciated. Persons who have always been blind can have no just idea of colors. Neither can one who has always been in love with sin, and under its controlling power, understand the wonderful transformation effected by regeneration, whereby old things are done away, and the sinner is made a free, new man in the Lord. Many have been ready to stake everything on their opinion that such a change is impossible, who by properly seeking it, have become as conscious of its accomplishment in themselves, as they formerly were of their aversion to religious duties. We ought to speak cautiously in matters which we have not fully tested.

This thought suggests another with regard to the higher states of grace. One who has been educated in the seventh chapter of Romans as a fair representation of the ultimatum in

spiritual attainments, is liable to cherish a prejudice against those who have gone beyond and claim to be living in the purer atmosphere of the eighth chapter. This is assuming too much, namely, that he has reached the height of possible perfection. The fact that I have obtained a great blessing does not prove that there is not a greater one for me, or that my brother does not enjoy it. The provisions of the gospel for the salvation of men are full and complete. Some in the different churches have tested them, while others have not. The witnesses about to be introduced claim to have made new discoveries, and to have gone higher in holiness than they formerly thought it possible. Let us hear them and give their testimony such attention as it deserves.

One of them, whose name I am not authorized to give, says :—

"My childhood was marked with developments of sorrow and depression, combined with sensibility. At the age of seven years, I was the subject of deep religious impressions, and was frequently under the most pungent convictions for sin, until I entered my nineteenth year; about that time I was reading Milton's

'Paradise Lost,' and Hervey's 'Meditations:' these works had a tendency to convince me more thoroughly, of the necessity of the atonement, and to deepen my religious impressions, which had then amounted to an anguish of soul. I was very careful to conceal the state of my mind from every individual—a strange timidity which accompanied all my religious experience. In the deepest mental affliction, I repaired to a distant place on the farm, and while on my knees in prayer, was powerfully and gloriously converted to God. I rose triumphant, but fell prostrate; the praises of my Redeemer flowed freely from my lips, comforting passages of Scripture occurred to my mind, with force and joy: my happiness continued inexpressible; for three days and nights, Satan scarcely dared to tempt me.

"Three years since the Life of Carvosso was put into my hands by my class-leader; I read it carefully, and found that it was my privilege to make higher attainments in the divine life than I had yet known. I earnestly besought the Lord to deepen his work of grace in my heart, and gradually lost all relish for everything that was not of a holy character. I grew

more fervent and importunate in prayer, and felt sensible of an increase of faith. A close investigation of the Scriptures had a tendency to confirm me in this holy faith. I plainly saw that the sacred pages were richly fraught with promises of sanctifying grace, and frequently advocated and enforced the doctrine.

"On the first day of last October (a memorable day to me), while sitting in company with two of my sisters, and expounding the word of God on that subject, the Spirit of the Lord descended upon me with so much power and glory, that I do not think I could have lived, if he had not in a measure withdrawn it. I was filled with all the fullness of God, and could only exclaim, 'I am sanctified, I am sanctified.' I seemed to be bathing in an ocean of perfect love; my life was hid with Christ in God, who had cleansed me from all sin, by the application of his more than precious blood. It is in vain I attempt to describe what I experienced on that occasion; language is far too weak, my words sink down under the weight of the meaning I wish to convey. Since then I have enjoyed that peace which passeth all understanding. My joys have been pure and abund-

ant. I seem to have lived all my life in comparative darkness, with only an occasional ray of light; but now my sun shines night and day; the Scriptures are an inconceivable rich mine, which grows brighter and more precious, as I advance; and in the midst of these sanctifying joys, I am often assailed by temptations and trials of a formidable character; but glory to God, they are made my richest blessings; I have a sweet and abiding assurance, that Christ is my in-dwelling Saviour; I am indeed a new creature. 'Old things have passed away, and all things are created anew in Christ Jesus.'"

A VOICE FROM ANOTHER FOLD.

Though we find traces of this high experience in all the ages of the Church, it has been more a matter of unbelief than of faith with the "rulers." Under the ministrations of the Wesleys and their coadjutors, it emerged into new life, and assumed a prominence becoming its importance. But most other sects demurred, and stoutly insisted that salvation from all sin is impossible until death. Still the doctrine advanced until many of its opponents proved it true by joyful experience.

"The subject of *heart* holiness," says one of them, "has been to me the last year one of all-absorbing interest. And not only heart holiness, but a holy walk, a holy life, a holy conversation, a life of entire *symmetrical* holiness ;— an aiming to be in the world as he was, our blessed Pattern, our holy Redeemer. I say, *for the last year*, holiness to the Lord has been my motto. I have been a professor of religion sixteen years, but I never heard of the doctrine of entire holiness, *as a thing to be realized in this life*, until February, 1839. When I tell you that I do not belong to your order, and had never been at all associated with a people of this belief, you will be able to account better for my ignorance. In the good providence of God, I went, last February, into a Methodist protracted meeting. I heard a sister there speak, as I never before heard man or woman speak. A holy composure sat on her countenance, and she seemed to me to be breathing the atmosphere of heaven. She spoke with the simplicity and love of the beloved disciple, who leaned on Jesus's bosom. I sought a private interview with her. I opened to her my heart. I told her I lived in a state of daily condemna-

tion, and I had never indulged a hope of living above this state. Then, for the first time in my life, I heard of Jesus, a present Saviour from all sin. We knelt side by side and prayed; she, to a present God, clearly seen in and through Jesus; I, to the Great Unknown, to God, afar off. The news of this salvation, a salvation from sin, was good news, glad tidings. This, thought I, is worthy of the Son of God; this is indeed *peace on earth.* I seemed to see, if this were true, it was the healing balm for all my woes.

"I will not undertake to describe my past experience. I will turn away from this long dark chapter of my history, only with saying, I remember three different periods, when, it now seems to me, I might easily have entered into this state of entire consecration to God, and perfect love in the soul, had I met with a friend to guide me. But I cannot excuse my sins, my unbelief of God's word. There God, *even my God professedly,* had always called me to holiness, and I may say in truth, that I never read and meditated upon his word, without seeing and feeling the difference between the gospel standard, and that by which I was living.

I had only one interview with this sister, as she left town, having been here only on a visit. Alone, unaided, except by the Spirit of God, I pursued the doctrine of heart holiness. I came to the word of God with a determination to lay aside my former creed; and to forget the experience of those dear servants of Christ I had long known and loved, and understand for myself what the salvation of the gospel was. Being so situated as to be able to control my time, I laid aside all work, excepting the more necessary and peculiarly pressing family duties, and devoted my time, for eight weeks, to the study of the Bible. I commenced with Paul's writings, and often read one epistle through four or five times before I went to another; dwelling on his expressions, and endeavoring to find out all his meaning. From the epistles I went to the gospels, and from the gospels to Isaiah's glowing descriptions of the church. I soon became speculatively convinced, not only of the extent of God's requirements, but of the obligation and the *ability* of the Christian to fulfill these requirements in and through Jesus, who I saw was manifested to take away our sins. I now set myself, by prayer and supplication, to

seek the Lord. I fasted, wept, and prayed. Passages of this import, 'if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him;' 'if ye have not the Spirit of Christ, ye are none of his,' were searching texts. The Spirit of God accompanied the word, and it was like a two-edged sword piercing my heart.

"But I had come to the Bible to receive and believe it all, and my eye fastened on the promise of our Saviour, 'Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.' Blessed, sweet promise, my heart swells with emotion while I repeat it. While pleading this promise, kneeling before God with the words on my lips, I felt a sweet assurance that my prayer was heard; a sensible peace entered into my soul. I arose and returned to my Bible with new emotions. Now I saw and believed. I should have said, that as soon as I believed that holiness was to be *attained* in this life, I immediately commenced perfecting myself—that is, I labored to control every sinful emotion, and herein I advanced externally, but found my *heart* was ill at rest. But after this peace or love entered into my soul, nothing moved me. I thought if every

friend on earth should die, my happiness could not be affected. I had but one desire, viz., that God's will might be done. I seemed to have no will of my own. I could conceive fully of the feelings of martyrs, and it seemed to me an easy thing to yield up life for Christ's sake. Indeed, I felt, *to die is gain.* I read my own heart's emotions in the strong language of Paul and David. Christ was my all in all. I could say, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee; and there is none on earth that I desire beside thee.' The presence of Christ was as much of a reality as if he had been in the flesh, sitting by my side; and as I read the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth, I received them as fully as if I had heard his own voice.

"Thus my feelings ran for several weeks; my soul seemed completely under the power of love. I knew of no contrary emotion existing there. I had been conscious, in weeks prior to this state of love, of the Spirit's power on my heart, particularly in setting home the truths of God's word, but I now received a special manifestation, as much of a reality to my soul as the sun light to my eye. It came gently, yet powerful and overpowering; it was like a mighty rushing

wind in the soul, extending itself through all my bodily frame. I said, 'Lord, I am thine, entirely thine: come life or come death, I am wholly consecrated to thee.' I seemed now to know what is meant by the Holy Ghost. This manifestation brought me nigher to God than ever before. I could now say, Father, Abba, Father. I seemed joined to Christ; the oneness I cannot define; but our Saviour prays, 'that they may all be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us,' and I think I know what he meant, and received the very thing he then prayed for. I could now say, 'I live, yet not I, Christ liveth in me.' I felt strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

"Now came various temptations, and in various ways; but out of them all the Lord delivered me, and he doth yet deliver, and I believe he ever will, if I only confide in him. I do know that my Saviour hath power over Satan, and through him I expect to conquer every foe. Sometimes I have been in heaviness through manifold temptations, doubtful of the path of duty, and *variously tried*, yet have I never lost my faith and love. As with the

desperation of a drowning man, clinging to some rope, extended to draw him to shore, thus have I held on to the promises of God, determined never to cease my hold. Often have I come, pleading, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee,' and on his promise anchored my soul, though in darkness, beset with temptations. For the last year I can say, the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith on the Son of God. Blessed be God, his word is as immutable as himself. I have known much of this world's happiness. Riches, friends, and intellectual pleasures have ever been spread out before me; but all, all I have ever enjoyed, now seems as nothing, compared with my happiness the past year. I have now found *rest to my soul;* everlasting life and blessedness have dawned there, and the prospect is widening, and I sometimes get an open vista into heaven. The sunlight of God's countenance, the *great God,* whose beautiful works I everywhere behold, and have so often admired, —even the terrible God, who rideth in the chariot of his anger, to destroy the rebellious nations from off the earth, this God is my God; the sunbeams of his love rest upon me;

upon *me*, a poor, frail child of dust, once all polluted with sin, but now a joint heir of Christ, a partaker of his holiness, with immortal glory full in view. Glory, glory be to God; glory and praise for ever and ever. Amen."

Three years later this happy man wrote in his diary :—

"To-day I enter on my —— year. I can look back only on the three last years of my life with any degree of satisfaction. Each day of these years has found my heart in the same position, delighting in God and seeking his glory; finding all my happiness in doing his will. The years previous to this, I mourn over as years of darkness and sin, of lamentations, and bitter repentings; as spent without God, or without the enjoyment of God. How could I enjoy God, in his works, in his word, while my soul was like the troubled deep, casting up mire and dirt?"—*Riches of Grace.*

These last words, no doubt, represent the condition of many, perhaps most, professors of religion, but not a state of *justification.* There may be weakness and ignorance in a justified believer, but no condemnation. "Being justified by faith," says St. Paul, "we have peace

with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." The status of many who begin to seek the "higher life," is that of conscious disobedience, or respectable sin. When God blesses them, and they find peace and joy, they account themselves sanctified, though they have only reached the condition represented by "justification" and "the new birth." But this is a grand improvement,—worth more than it costs, and lays the proper foundation for growth in grace.

THE BLESSING GAINED WITH LESS DIFFICULTY.

The subject is further illustrated by the case of an honest man, who says :—

"I humbly desire to magnify the grace of God, by publicly testifying what grace has done for me. Truly it is the little leaven that leaveneth the whole lump. Five years ago I was convicted of my state as a sinner, needing a Saviour. I greatly desired to become a Christian: but I did not receive the Saviour by faith, as mine to wash me in his blood. I only hoped in his mercy. My friends urged me to join the church. In much fear I went before the Session, and was received. I was then told to

go to work for the good of sinners. This I did, but it was all labor. I had no love constraining me to seek their salvation. How then could I speak of love to others, while I was myself under a legal dispensation, and in bondage, serving God with a slavish fear?

"Last winter, my Saviour was pleased to send his Spirit to convince me of sin, to show me my state as a sinner in his sight, exposed to wrath. I gave up my hope and came to Christ anew. I could be satisfied with nothing short of complete deliverance from sin; and I was led to receive him as a full Saviour—not only to pardon my past sins, but to cleanse my soul, deliver me from the *dominion* of sin, and to fill my heart with perfect love. Glory be unto *his name.* He did deliver me from all my iniquities, and filled my soul with peace. O how sweet was the name of Father. Christ became my prophet, my priest, and my king; my prophet to teach, my priest to atone, and my king to rule my heart; bowing my will in sweet subjection, so that the will of my heavenly Father was mine. My heart was filled with longing desire, that all the children of God may know this great salvation. I was grieved, that

the ministers of Christ should so limit his power. O how my soul longed to hear Christ preached as a full Saviour, who delivers from all sin.

"I can now rejoice in the prospect of death; for why should we fear to go to Him whom our souls love—who is to us 'the chief among ten thousand, and the one altogether lovely?' I can say, with Paul, that 'to live is Christ, but to die is gain.' As my body is sustained by daily food, so is my spirit sustained by Christ. He is my life; I do, indeed, eat his flesh and drink his blood, day by day; I live by him. O what a glorious life—a life of faith—a hidden life, which the world knows nothing of. I adore the goodness of God, in bringing my soul into this glorious rest. The rest of Christ is glorious; a rest from our own works, that Christ may work in us to do his perfect will. It is not being engaged in the service of God a part of the time, and the other part serving ourselves; but it is our life to do his will. O what a delightful prospect of growing up into Christ, our living head in all things. Before, it was sinning and repenting, always falling; but now, glory be unto God, it is growing in

grace and in the knowledge of my precious Saviour. It is receiving his fullness. It is having my conversation in heaven. It is having, constantly, an earnest of my inheritance. Before, I was afraid to speak of Christ to sinners; for I did not know him myself; but now I feel a joy in recommending him to all. The arms of love that encompass me, would all mankind embrace.

"Many of my friends think that I am in an error. All praise unto Jesus. He is my strength. I know that it is all of grace, purchased by the sufferings and death of my risen Lord. Because he lives, I shall live also. I know that the moment I trust in self, then I fall. He is my all. O that all his people might know him as he is! How sweet is his promise, that with himself he will freely give us all things. What love! what condescending love! to bestow on us such rich blessings. O that all his children would taste and see that the Lord is good."—*Ibid.*

These experiences indicate, perhaps, the substance of the great work known as "entire sanctification," or the "higher life." They might be multiplied by the hundred, but it is

unnecessary to our purpose. They show the exceeding height of our calling, and the ordinary methods of reaching it. Also, the folly of living in bondage to sin in the presence of such glorious possibilities. May God sanctify them to the salvation of all who read these pages.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

From a careful examination of a large number of testimonies to God's word, in this particular, it is manifest :—

1. That, with many, this experience is nothing more than a genuine conversion. They accepted insufficient evidence of pardon and regeneration, joined the church and assumed to live a Christian life, without the joy of salvation, or the witness of the Spirit. Of course they found their old propensities ever present and difficult to control, and felt the need of more grace, and did well to seek it.

It is to be feared that many now in our churches were never born again. According to their own admissions, they are in bondage to sin, though interested in the church, and desire its prosperity. They sadly need a new heart, and ought to seek it at once. If they

will comply with the conditions, God will fill them with his love, and show them "his glory," as never before. The reason that so many come short in this matter is, they do not fully submit to God, and adopt his will as the rule of their lives. They rather consent to do certain things which they hope God will accept, and therefore account themselves Christians while they are yet rebellious in other things. This will not do. God will no more forgive our sins than he will cleanse us from all unrighteousness, until we completely surrender to him. It is not sacrifice that he wants, but obedience. And that, not as meritorious, but as *evidence* of subordination, and trust in his promises and the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. It is equally certain, too, that many who were thoroughly converted, lost something of their first love before they embarked in the pursuit of entire sanctification. This is confirmed by the testimony of multitudes. A book of more than sixty experiences of holiness, now lying before me, abounds in confirmatory statements of this position. One brother says, that before he sought sanctification, he lived a life of "sinning and repenting, of walking

with God, and devotedness to the world." Another, "I could not say with the holy apostle, 'To live is Christ.' I felt to live was sin." And still another, "I lived in a state of daily condemnation." This is a poor foundation on which to build a perfect character. Still there is hope for all who are conscious of sin, and aspire after holiness. God knows our infirmities and will withhold no good thing from any one who seeks him with the whole heart. He will forgive their sins, heal their backslidings, purify their hearts, and fill them with the Holy Ghost.

3. Another important fact is, that growth in grace is not generally promoted by *controversy* about its possibilities. Whether we may reach the heights described, is best determined by seeking them in such ways as God has ordained, and many have successfully adopted. Nothing short of the logic of personal experience can fully satisfy the human soul. "*Taste* and *see* that the Lord is good," is the scripture plan of effective discussion. The *beauty* of complete holiness, in *spirit* and *practice*, must be, and indeed is, charming to all who really love God and his people. Even sinners are

often fascinated by seeing its wonderful adaptation to their forlorn condition.

4. And, may we not be too tenacious as to the *order* in which we receive it, whether at conversion or afterward? Is it not better to recognize it wherever manifested without regard to that order? Some believers, of different religious connections, enjoy it, who never heard of it as a distinct *second* blessing. We met one of this kind lately at a holiness meeting, who had lived for years in the fullness of the Spirit, though he had never attended such a meeting before. He believed and was saved to the uttermost, by himself alone, like a sailor of our acquaintance, who experienced a great change at sea, and knew not what it was until he came home and heard Christians talk about religion, and then discovered that that was the very thing he enjoyed. If the beautiful thing itself were more charmingly presented in experience and testimony, and less time employed to prove it to be a *second* blessing, would it not be more readily embraced and generally enjoyed?

CHAPTER XX.

THE SUPPORT WHICH CHRISTIANITY PROMISES TO ITS BELIEVING SUBJECTS, CONFIRMED BY COMPETENT WITNESSES.

DEATH is represented in the word of God as a departure out of this world to another (2 Tim. iv. 7); a dissolution of the body (2 Cor. v. 1); going the way of all the earth (Josh. xxiii. 14); returning to dust (Eccl. xii. 7); sleep, etc., all of which descriptions grow out of different aspects of it, as it appears to the living. But we think of no designation more strikingly justified by the facts, than "The *king of terrors*" employed by Job. However people may endeavor to divest it of its hideousness, they seldom succeed in making it at all agreeable without the aid of the gospel. It is dreadful to most *pagans*, who have lingering apprehensions of greater evils beyond,—to *Romanists*, who have their purgatory, limbo, and even hell, which they regard as the worst of all possibilities,—and to unregenerate Protestants, "who

through fear of death, are all their lifetime subject to bondage." (Heb. ii. 15.)

How the heathen became possessed of the idea of another world, it may not be easy to determine; but that readers of the Bible should have it, and be filled with fearful apprehensions, is not surprising. That book declares future punishment for the impenitent as clearly as it does reward for the righteous. It is utter folly to believe in heaven and discard hell. Both are attested by the same authority. The most reasonable unbeliever in the latter, is he who rejects both, and the Bible which reveals them. This explains why those who study the Scriptures, but make no effort to obey them, cannot divest themselves of the fear of death and eternity.

While it is not difficult to find scraps of revelation that ingenuity may torture into some faint argument against the doctrine of everlasting punishment, the utterances of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is generally admitted to have been a good man and full of divine knowledge, at least, sweep it all away. Let us notice a few of them. Alluding to the judgment to come, he says :—

"The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." (Matt. xiii. 41, 42.)

"These" (those on his left hand, the wicked) "shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." (Matt. xxv. 46.) The Greek word here translated "everlasting" and "eternal," is the same, and means endless.

We are indebted to the Saviour, too, for the story of the rich man and Lazarus, which is to the same effect, revealing heaven and hell, with an "*impassable*" gulf between them. (Luke xvi. 19–31.)

The writings of the apostles, who received their instructions directly from the Master, abound in similar declarations. We might fill pages with them, but will quote but one more, "If God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment. . . . The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the

unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished." (2 Peter ii. 4, 9.)

Now, the object of the gospel was to provide for the pardon and cancellation of sin and the fear of punishment, which being effected, the believer is no longer tormented with the thought of leaving the world, however pleasant it may have been to him, but is enabled to "rejoice in the hope of the glory of God." Hence it is that those who fully accept the gospel by faith in Christ, look upon death as a friend, not an enemy ;—as the end of sin and sorrow, and the commencement of a higher and happier life, which shall have no termination :—a life with God, and the just made perfect in heaven. It is reasonable, therefore, to expect that they will meet it with composure and even delight.

That they do so, the Scriptures attest in many places. Consider the following :—

"Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright ; for the end of that man is *peace*." (Psa. xxxvii. 37.) "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear on evil ; for thou art with me ; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." (Psa. xxiii. 4.) "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his

saints." (Psa. cxvi. 15.) "Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." (Rom. xiv. 8.) "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." . . . "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better. Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you." (Phil. i. 21, 23, 24.) "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord." (Rev. xiv. 13.) "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? . . . Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. xv. 55, 57.)

That unbelievers have nothing in their dying experiences corresponding with this representation, is obvious. The best they anticipate is to die without special alarm; but many of them fail in this, and utterly break down as they near their end, renounce their unbelief, and call upon the Christian's God, as we shall hereafter show. Formal and heretical professors do little better, and confess at last that their religion fails them in the trying hour. Few comparatively pass this crisis without abjuring their former assumptions, and seeking the aid of

Christian prayers, which they refused in health. Regenerate Protestants alone anticipate a joyful death. Being happy in God by his abounding grace, they are authorized to believe, and *do* believe, that he will sustain them when their "flesh fails." Hence they rapturously sing, in life and health :—

"O the transporting, rapturous scene
That rises to my sight !
Sweet fields array'd in living green,
And rivers of delight.

Fill'd with delight, my raptured soul
Would here no longer stay ;
Though Jordan's waves around me roll,
Fearless I'd launch away."

Now, the question is, *do* Christians die in this happy manner? That the martyrs triumphed over death is genarally conceded.

ST. STEPHEN,

when being accused before the mock council that was about to consign him to death, was in so happy a frame of mind that his face shone as "if it had been the face of an angel." And when the mob "gnashed upon him with their teeth," he exclaimed, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." Then kneeling down he

prayed for his murderers, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge," and "fell asleep, saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

POLYCARP,

one of the apostolic fathers, was burned A. D. 169. When approaching the place of execution, some of the magistrates tried to persuade him to renounce the Christian faith, but all in vain. The pro-consul urged him to blaspheme Christ, but he replied, "Eighty-six years have I served him, during all which time he never did me injury; how can I blaspheme my King and my Saviour who hath saved me?" "But I have wild beasts, and I will expose you to them, unless you recant." "Call them," said the good bishop. "I will tame your spirit by fire," added the pro-consul. "You threaten me with the fire which burns only for a moment," replied the martyr, "but are yourself ignorant of the fire of eternal punishment, reserved for the ungodly." Finding that he would not recant, he was consigned to the flames, in the midst of which he sung praises to God, and thanked him for the honor of a martyr's death.

In these and many similar cases which occurred about the same time, the persecutors were pagans, but when, a little later, the church and state combined, the church had a temporary rest, until it adopted various heathenish sentiments and rites, which conscientious Christians could not approve. Then the fires of persecution were rekindled with redoubled fury against all dissentients, who were obliged to surrender to the Roman hierarchy or die.

Thus we are introduced to a new and large class of martyrs,—the innocent victims of popery, whom no man can number. But they maintained their integrity.

JOHN HUSS,

of the fifteenth century, was most inhumanly treated by the pope and his satelites, and at last burned at the stake against the remonstrances of multitudes who knew and loved him for his goodness and greatness. His priestly murderers stripped him of his episcopal robes, and put a paper mitre on his head painted with images of devils, and labeled, "A ringleader of heretics." But he endured the insult with patience. He was then chained

to the stake, and the fagots were piled up to his chin, when he said to the executioner, "You are going to burn a goose (*Huss* meaning goose in the Bohemian language), but in a century you will have a swan, whom you can neither roast nor boil," prophetically recognizing Martin Luther, who appeared about a hundred years after. The fagots being lighted, the good man sung a hymn loudly and cheerfully as his soul ascended to God in holy triumph.

JEROME OF PRAGUE

was soon after treated as his friend Huss had been. Arrested without authority, he was hurried into prison, and nearly starved, and at length dragged before his accusers for trial, and to cap the climax, denied the right of pleading his own cause. This was too much for him to endure without remonstrance, when he exclaimed:—

"What *barbarity* is this! For three hundred and forty days have I been confined in a variety of prisons. There is not a misery, there is not a want, that I have not experienced. To my accusers you have allowed the fullest scope of accusation—to me, you deny the least oppor-

tunity of defence. Not an hour will you indulge me in preparing for my trial. . . . The cause I now plead is not my own cause: it is the cause of men; it is the cause of Christians; it is the cause which is to effect the rights of posterity."

But this noble speech, which was worthy of the man and of human rights, was overridden and the case hurried on, charging him with what? 1. That he was a derider of the *papal* dignity; 2. An opposer of the pope; 3. An enemy to the cardinals; a persecutor of the prelates; a hater of the Christian religion, meaning popery. Of course he was insulted, tortured, and burned alive. But he approached his fate singing, and embraced the stake with cheerfulness. His tormentors going behind him to set fire to the pile, he said to them, "Come here and kindle it before my eyes; for if I had been afraid of it, I had not come to this place."

ESCH AND VOES

were the first martyrs of the Reformation by Luther, and met their cruel fate like Christians. The Roman Church, the mother of harlots, then as now, adjudged them heretics and

handed them over to her co-partner, the state, for torture, and they were burned, singing with joyful hearts.

How this same inhuman church, claiming infallibility as it does, and the right to enforce obedience to its ungodly mandates, can be regarded otherwise than the enemy of the race, it is impossible to conceive. May God save the world from its murderous spirit.

Christian Protestants are always ready to die well, when, and however God may call. Romanists require time, and priestly services in death, and long after, to render them entirely safe. When the late pope was approaching his end, his adherents, the world over, were officially summoned to pray for the "repose of his soul."

REV. EDWARD PAYSON,

the distinguished pastor of Portland, Me., was converted at the age of twenty, and died in the prime of his manhood in 1827. When his daughter approached him to witness his departure, he smiled, and affectionately kissing her, said, "God bless you, my daughter." Soon after he exclaimed, "Peace! peace! victory!

victory!" A few hours later his happy soul took its flight to heaven.

DR. WILBUR FISK,

the first principal of Wilbraham Academy, and the first president of the Wesleyan University, being informed that the physicians had decided unfavorably, replied :—

"Death has no terror to me." . . . "I feel that my soul is centered in the love of God, in Christ Jesus." Turning to his wife he said, "Think not when you see this poor feeble body stretched in death, that that is your husband. O no! your husband will have escaped, free and liberated from every clog.". . . "What! talk of burying your husband! No, never! Your husband cannot be buried! he will be in heaven." A friend referring to there being a place of rest for the weary, he responded, "Bless God for that." Still later another asked him, "Do you know me?" Pressing his hand, he answered in a whisper, "Yes; glorious hope!" His triumph was complete.

REV. SAMUEL RUTHERFORD

was on his dying bed when the parliament of Scotland summoned him for trial, because he

had stood up for liberty and religion. "Tell the parliament," said he, to the officer, "that I have received a summons to a higher bar; I must needs answer that first; and when the day you name shall come, I shall be where few of you shall enter."

A little before his death he said to visiting ministers, "There is none like Christ. O, dear brethren, pray for Christ, preach for Christ, do all for Christ; feed the flock of God, and O, beware of man-pleasing."—Still later he exclaimed, "I feel, I feel, I believe, I joy, I rejoice, I feed on manna; my eyes shall see my Redeemer, and I shall be ever with him. And what would you more? I have been a sinful man; but I stand at the best pass that ever a man did. Christ is mine and I am his. *Glory, glory* to my Creator and Redeemer forever. Glory shines in Immanuel's land. O for arms to embrace him. O for a well-tuned harp!" Thus exultantly he passed away.

During the quadrenium of the Methodist Episcopal Church ending in 1832, fifty-five travelling ministers finished their course in triumph. Bishop George died shouting "Glory to God!"—Robert Minshall, exclaiming, "I

have been a travelling man, my lot is in heaven. Glory, glory, forever and ever!"—Samuel Doughty said, "Death has no terrors."—"Yesterday," testified Henry Holmes, "I examined myself closely, and I saw my way before me as clearly as the rising sun;"—"Perfectly happy," exclaimed Christopher Thomas; "death is my friend; I live in Christ, and Christ lives in me. I have all I desire. Glory, hallelujah!"

"Willing, willing, willing!" cried Moses Amedon, in his dying moments; while Edwin Ray declared, "The religion which I have professed and preached has comforted me in life, supported me in affliction, and now enables me to triumph in death." The others died in like manner.—*Life of Bishop Hedding*, pp. 408, 409.

These are only fair specimens of the dying experience of pious ministers. Christians in the private walks of life are not less favored. The history of the Church abounds in sublime expressions of their triumph. Strong men and timid women, alike have joy in death. Even children, who give their hearts to God, are more than conquerors through Him who said,

"Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. xix. 14.)

SIR MATTHEW HALE,

lord chief-justice of England, gave his heart to God in his youth, and met his approaching deliverance with exultant joy.

JOSEPH LOCKE,

one of the greatest men that England ever produced, thanked God in his last sickness for "having blessed him with the knowledge of the Divine Saviour." He died in glorious hope of eternal life.

FERRANO

was an East Indian idolater, and was converted to Christ by missionary effort, and led a consistent Christian life. Nearing his end, he said, "The Lord is my portion: he now supports my feeble frame, while death is performing his office. . . . Christ has removed the heavy load; he died that I might live. . . . I can now realize his presence in the sweet consolation I experience and through a sense of his dying love, and his willingness to save a sinner, vile as I know myself to be." When asked by

a friend who was about to pray, whether he wished him to pray that the Lord would continue him longer, or take him to himself, he replied, "The latter. I have been too long from him; I can now see him through a glass darkly; but I feel the strongest desire to see him face to face, and enjoy his presence forever."

ME,

a blind warrior of the South Sea Islands, was converted and lived well. Being taken sick in the absence of the missionary, and immediately visited on his return, he was delighted, and said:—

"I shall die happy now." Speaking of the visits of his brethren, he said, "They do not come as often as I could wish; yet I am not lonely, for I have frequent visits from God. God and I were talking when you came in. . . . I was praying 'to depart and be with Christ, which is far better' than to remain longer in this sinful world." His last words were, "O death, where is thy sting?" Here his voice faltered and his happy spirit took its flight.

ELIZABETH ROWE,

whose name is familiar to the Christian Church,

gave her heart to God while young. Nearing the close of a long and useful life, she wrote :—

"I have now done with mortal things, and all to come is vast eternity—eternity ! How transporting is the sound ! As long as God exists, my being and happiness are, I doubt not, secure. These unbounded desires, which the wide creation cannot limit, shall be satisfied forever. I shall drink at the fountain-head of pleasure, and be refreshed with the emanations of original life and joy. Through the blood of the Lamb I hope for entire victory over the last enemy."

What God does in death for the wise and great, he does for the poor and ignorant.

AGNES MORRIS

was a poor West Indian slave, who was led to God by the missionaries. To a lady, Mrs. T., who visited her in her last sickness, she said :—

"Misses, you come ! This tongue can't tell what Jesus do for me. Me call my Saviour, day and night, and he come. He comfort me here," laying her hand on her breast. "But are you sure of going to heaven ?" asked Mrs. T. "Yes, me sure. Me see de way clere, and

shine before me,"—looking and pointing upward with a smiling face. "If dis minute Jesus will take me home, me ready." While they were singing, she was in raptures, and repeated, "For me—for me—poor sinner!" Lifting her hands, she exclaimed, "What a glory! what a glory! Seeing her daughter weeping, she said, "What you cry for? No cry—follow Jesus. He will take care of you;" and turning to Mrs. T., she said, "Show um de pa,"—meaning the path to heaven. Thus the poor saint died in a miserable cabin on a board covered with leaves. Truly,

> "Jesus can make a dying bed
> Feel soft as downy pillows are."

LITTLE ELLEN FAULDS

was seriously disposed when three or four years old. Her last illness occurred in her eleventh year, when she seemed inclined to die rather than live. When her mother asked her why, she answered, "I long to go to heaven." She loved to pray. Thinking death near, she asked her mother to send for her father, saying, "If he does not come soon, he will be too late. If I see him no more, tell him to be sure to live to God when I am dead."

"The Lord bless thee, my lamb," said her mother.

"I am blessed," she replied, "and shall be blessed: do not weep for me; and do not weep when I am buried: I shall go to heaven. If I had lived till I had been a woman, very likely I might have gone through a deal of trouble, and perhaps might have been very wicked, and been lost at last, but if I die now I shall be saved." Just before she breathed her last, she said to her father, "I am happy. I am not afraid to die."

FRANKY

was the child of irreligious parents, and had a little sister, Alice, five years old. A few months before Franky was taken sick, Alice went to spend the night with a Christian neighbor's children. "Come, Alice," they said, when about to retire, "kneel down with us and say, 'Our Father,' before we go to bed."

"But," said Alice, "I don't know what 'Our Father' is."

"Well, don't you want to learn it?" said one.

"O yes," said Alice, and soon committed it to memory.

The next morning she returned home and told Franky all about her visit, and "Our Father," and *he* learned the prayer, after which they daily knelt and repeated it together. Soon after they found and committed, "Now I lay me down to sleep," and repeated that also, with evident pleasure. When Franky was dying in the night, he desired them to send for the minister, who had cautiously prayed with him once before. But his parents could not think of calling him up at that hour of the night. So, to relieve the case, the mother went up stairs and took up little Alice and brought her to her brother's bedside, and told her what he wanted, whereupon she promptly knelt, and said:—

"Now Franky lays him down to sleep,
I pray the Lord his soul to keep:
If he should die before he wake,
I pray the Lord his soul to take."

"The first words," says the narrator, "soothed the sufferer, and with the last his spirit fled."

Who can doubt that God was pleased with this whole transaction? The kneeling and little prayers of praying children were made a great blessing to poor Franky.

But we need not consult books and papers to find evidence of the power of religion to support in the dying hour. Every day brings unmistakable proofs of the fact. Most true Christians have witnessed the dying triumphs of their friends.

The writer has attended many believers in their last sickness, and can testify in truth and sincerity, that he has never known a Christian to renounce religion in his last hours and embrace Infidelity, Universalism, Spiritualism, Unitarianism, or any other ism. Many have regretted that they had not sought the Lord earlier, and served him more faithfully, and all have desired to become better Christians, even where they seemed to be filled with joy. But he has known many to renounce these and other errors, like the thief on the cross, and seek to be converted according to the Bible, as a necessary preparation for death ; and he has prayed for them, and instructed them with reference to this end. What folly it is to defend a *theory* in life and health, that we cannot trust in our last earthly moments. And what supreme wickedness it is to advocate sentiments in the presence of others, in which we have no confi-

dence. Many have, no doubt, been ruined by this very common practice.

Our observation in regard to the death of Christians, is, that "their end is peace." We visited an old acquaintance lately in her closing conflicts. She was a wife and mother. It appeared inevitable that the time of her departure was at hand. She was aware of the fact, and was prepared for it. God and heaven had been the themes of her song for many years. The past was full of pleasant memories, and the future of prospective glory. She longed to depart and be with Christ. A few weeks after she breathed her last in holy triumph.

We shall never forget the dying radiance of a young lady, whom we had the pleasure of receiving into the Church several years ago. Her parents were far from God, and she had no spiritual help at home. She was young and beautiful, but frail. Being smitten by disease, I was called to see her. The doctor and I entered the room at the same moment. She was in a sitting posture, leaning on her mother's bosom. The doctor approached, and was feeling of her pulse, when she asked, with a look of intense interest, "Doctor, am I dying?"

He gave her no answer. "Doctor," she repeated, "*am I dying?*" He still hesitated, not knowing the power of God to sustain a delicate young lady in such circumstances. Again she asked, "*Am I dying?*" He saw that she was in earnest, and must know. "Well," said he, "Mary Ann, if I must tell you, I think you cannot live very long." She was not disappointed, nor dismayed; but bringing her lily white hands together, she exclaimed, "Glory to Jesus! I am going home. Praise the Lord, I am happy." Her father coming in, she exhorted him to meet her in heaven. In this beautiful frame of mind she soon passed away, a dying witness to the truth of the Scriptures, "Blessed (or *happy*) are the dead which die in the Lord."

CHAPTER XXI.

OF THE POSSIBILITY OF REACHING A STATE OF UNBELIEF, IN WHICH THERE IS NO HOPE OF MERCY, PROVED BY THE EXPERIENCE OF DESPAIR.

WHILE the word of God presents the amplest provision for the salvation of sinners, it clearly indicates that they may neglect it to a point beyond which there is no mercy for them. Thus saith the Lord :—

"Because I have called, and ye refused: I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh. . . . Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me." (Prov. i. 24–28.)

These words represent a class of forsaken sinners, who are conscious of their condition, and are filled with dismay at the thought of it. We have no doubt that there are others who

are equally lost, yet have no sense of their condition, and die without remorse or alarm. They have resisted the call of God to duty and salvation, until left by the Spirit to their own long nourished delusion and indifference, perhaps, to believe some flattering lie, and be damned. Of course they die quietly,—but it is the quiet of judicial blindness, rather than of religious confidence and hope. The Sodomites were in this condition. When at the very point of destruction, Lot went out, and spoke to his sons-in-law, saying, "Up, get you out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city, he seemed as one that mocked." (Gen.xix. 14.)

The Jews were equally at ease, when Jesus wept over them and said, "If thou hadst known, even thou, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes," though their doom was sealed, and ruin was at the door. The tranquillity of impenitent, dying sinners of mature age, who have persistently disregarded the strivings of the Holy Spirit and the monitions of conscience, is stronger proof of their destruction than of their salvation.

A few sad experiences of these classes will occupy the present painful chapter.

A PERSONAL ACQUAINTANCE

of my youth, the son of a pious mother and a respectable father, and a man of more than ordinary intelligence and influence, treated religion with contempt, and did all he could to arrest its progress. He was not intemperate, though loose in his principles, but seemed to have a special aversion to spiritual things, and insulted all with whom he conversed on the subject. This feeling he carried into a very large business, and endeavored to diffuse it among his workmen and associates, but he was too profane and ugly to attract many followers. As he advanced toward old age, he became still more bitter and disagreeable, cursing God, man, and things generally. His last sickness was singular and dreadful in the extreme. But he was full of hatred and blasphemy to the end of a protracted struggle. The case is too recent to be detailed, and should be a warning to strong young men, not to trifle with God, or their early convictions. Truly, "the wicked is driven away in his wickedness."

FRANCIS NEWPORT.

This is not a recent case, but is as well authenticated as the experience of Luther or Calvin. Mr. Newport was religiously and liberally educated, but soon fell under the influence of infidels, lost his religious impressions, and became the companion of literary skeptics. His dissipation led to disease, and that to reflection and distress of mind, which was unutterable, and reduced him in a few days from robust health to the merest skeleton. In writing to his infidel companions, he said :—

"Who, alas! can write his own tragedy without tears, or copy out the seal of his own damnation without horror? That there is a God I know, because I continually feel the effects of his wrath; that there is a hell I am equally certain, having received an earnest of my inheritance there already in my breast." Hearing his friends whispering together, he called them all to him, and continued, "You imagine me melancholy and distracted; I wish I were either, but it is part of my judgment that I am not. No; my apprehension of persons and things is rather more quick and vigorous than

it was when I was in perfect health ; and it is my curse, because thereby I am more sensible of the condition I am fallen into. Would you be informed why I am become a skeleton in three or four days? See how then I have despised my Maker, and denied my Redeemer ; I have joined myself to the atheists and profane, and continued this course under many convictions, till my iniquity was ripe for vengeance, and the just judgment of God overtook me, when my security was the greatest, and the checks of my conscience the least. How idle is it to bid the fire not to burn when fuel is administered, and to command the seas to be smooth in the midst of a storm ! Such is my case ; and what are the comforts of my friends? But I am spent,—I can complain no more. Would to God that the cause of my complaining would cease. . . . But whither am I going ? "

The reporter of these utterances being called away for a day or two, returned and was informed that his expressions were shorter but more horrible. Going to his bedside, he inquired how he did, to which he replied :—

" Damned and lost forever." But, said the

reporter, "the purposes of God are hidden; perhaps you are punished in this life to fit you for a better." He answered, "They are not hidden to me, but discovered; and my greatest torment, my punishment here, is for an example to others. O that there was no God, or that this God could cease to be, for I am sure he will have no mercy on me." But said his friend, "There is no contending with our Creator, and, therefore, avoid such words as may provoke him more."

"True," said he, "there is no contending; I wish there was a possibility of getting above God,—that would be a heaven to me."

His friend entreated him not to give way to such blasphemous thoughts. But he answered, "Read we not in the Revelation, of them that blasphemed God because of their pains? I am one of the number. O how I envy the happiness of Cain and Judas." But said his astonished adviser, "You are yet alive, and do not feel the torments of those who are in hell."

"This is true or false," he replied. "If it be true, how heavy will those torments be, of which I do not yet feel the uttermost? But I know it is false, and that I endure more

than the spirits of the damned ; for I have the very same tortures upon my spirit that they have, beside those I endure in my body. I believe at the day of judgment the torments of my mind and body will both together be more intense ; but as I now am, no spirit in hell endures what I do. How gladly would I change my condition for hell! How earnestly would I entreat my angry Judge to send me thither, were I not afraid that out of vengeance he would deny me."

Here he closed his eyes, groaning and gnashing his teeth, when he felt of his pulse, exclaiming :—

"How lazily my minutes go on ! When will be the last breath, the last pulse, that shall beat my spirit out of this decayed mansion, into the desired regions of death and hell ? O, I find it just now at hand ! And what shall I say now ? Am not I afraid again to die ? Ah ! the forlorn hopes of him that hath not God to go to ! Nothing to fly to for peace and comfort !"

"Here," says our reporter, "his speech failed him. We all, believing him to be dying, went to prayer, which threw him into an agony ; in

which, though he could not speak, he turned away his face, and made what noise he could to hinder him from hearing. Perceiving this, we gave over. As soon as he could speak, he exclaimed, 'Tigers and monsters, are ye also become devils to torment me, to give me a prospect of heaven, to make my hell more intolerable?'"

"Alas! sir," said his friend, "it is our desire of your happiness that casts us down at the throne of grace; if God denies assistance, who else can give it? If *He* will not have mercy, whither must we go for it?"

To this he answered, "O! that is the dart that wounds me! God is become my enemy, and there is none so strong as to deliver out of his hands. He consigns me over to eternal vengeance, and there is none able to redeem me! Were there such another God as he, who would patronize my cause? or were I above God, or independent of him; could I act or dispose of myself as I pleased; then would my horrors cease, and the expectations and designs of my formidable enemies be frustrated. But O! this cannot be, for I——"

His voice failed again, and he began to

struggle and gasp for breath; which having recovered, with a groan dreadful and horrid as if it had been more than human, he cried out, "*O! the insufferable pangs of hell and damnation!*" and expired.

ALTEMONT.

This is the name given by Dr. Young to a man of rank and talents, whose dreadful end he describes as follows:—

"The sad evening before the death of the noble Altemont, I was with him. No one was there but his physician, and an intimate friend, whom he loved and whom he had ruined. At my coming in he said, 'You and the physician are come too late. I have neither life nor hope. You both aim at miracles. You would raise the dead!' 'Heaven,' I said, 'was merciful,' to which he responded, 'Or I could not have been thus guilty. What has it done to bless and to save me? I have been too strong for Omnipotence! I have plucked down ruin!' I said, 'The blessed Redeemer—' 'Hold! hold! you wound me. This is the rock on which I split—I denied his name!'

"Refusing to hear anything from me, or to

take anything from the physician, he lay silent as far as sudden darts of pain would permit, till the clock struck. Then with vehemence he said, 'O time! time! it is fit thou shouldst strike thy murderer to the heart. How art thou fled forever! A month! O for a single week! I ask not for years; though an age were too little for the much I have to do.' On my saying, 'We could not do too much; that heaven was a blessed place,' he exclaimed, 'So much the worse. 'Tis lost! 'tis lost! Heaven is to me the severest part of hell.' Soon after I proposed prayer. 'Pray you that can. I never prayed. I cannot pray—nor need I. Is not Heaven on my side already? It closes with my conscience. Its severest strokes but second my own.'

"His friend being much touched, even to tears, at this (who could forbear? I could not), with a most effectionate look he said: 'Keep those tears for thyself. I have undone thee. Dost thou weep for me? That's cruel. What can pain me more?'

"Here his friend, too much affected, would have left him: 'No, stay, thou still mayest hope. Therefore hear me. How madly have

I talked! How madly hast thou listened and believed! But look on my present state as a full answer to thee and to myself. This body is all weakness and pain: but my soul, as if stung up by torment to greater strength and spirit, is full powerful to reason, full mighty to suffer. And that which thus triumphs within the jaws of morality is, doubtless, immortal. And as for a Diety, nothing less than an *Almighty* could inflict what I now feel.'

"I was about to congratulate this passive, involuntary confessor, on his asserting two prime articles of his creed, extorted by the rack of nature, when he passionately exclaimed, 'No, no! let me speak on! I have not long to speak. My much-injured friend! my soul, as my body, lies in ruin—in scattered fragments of broken thought. Remorse for the past, throws my thoughts on the future; worse dread of the future, strikes them back on the past. I turn, and turn, and find no ray. Didst thou feel half the mountain that is on me, thou wouldst struggle with the martyr for his stake, and bless Heaven for the flame: that is not an everlasting flame; that is not an unquenchable fire.'

"How were we struck! Yet, soon after, still more. With what an eye of distraction, what a face of despair, he cried out, 'My principles have poisoned my friend; my extravagance has beggared my boy; my unkindness has murdered my wife! And is there another hell? O! thou blasphemed, yet most indulgent Lord God! Hell itself is a refuge, if it hide me from thy frown.'

"Soon after his understanding failed. His terrified imagination uttered horrors not to be repeated, or ever forgot. And ere the sun arose, the gay, young, noble, ingenuous, accomplished, and most wretched Altemont expired."

ANTETHEUS.

The lamented Bishop Clark gives the following account of a gentleman of infidel principles, written by a Mr. Cumberland and published in the "Observer," to whom for prudential reasons he appropriates this name:—

"I remember him," says Mr. Cumberland, "in the height of his fame, the hero of his party; no man so caressed, followed and applauded; he was a little loose, his friends would own, in his moral character, but then, he was

the most honest fellow in the world ; it was not to be denied that he was rather free in his notions, but then he was the best creature living. I have seen men of the gravest character wink at his sallies, because he was so pleasant, and so well-bred, it was impossible to be angry with him. Everything went well with him, and Antetheus seemed to be at the summit of human prosperity, when he was suddenly seized with alarming symptoms : he was at his country-house, and (which had rarely happened to him) he at that time chanced to be alone ; wife or family he had none, but out of the multitude of his friends no one happened to be near him at the moment of his attack. A neighboring physician was called out of his bed in the night to come to him with all haste in his extremity : he found him sitting up in his bed supported by pillows, his countenance full of horror, his breath struggling as in the article of death, his pulse intermitting, and at times beating with such rapidity as could hardly be counted. Antetheus dismissed the attendants he had about him, and eagerly demanded of the physician, if he thought him in danger. The

physician answered that he must fairly tell him he was in imminent danger.

"'How so! how so! Do you think me dying?'

"He was sorry to say the symptoms indicated death.

"'Impossible! you must not let me die: I dare not die: O doctor! save me if you can.'

"'Your condition, sir, is such, that it is not in mine, nor any other man's art to save you; and I think I should not do my duty if I gave you any false hopes in these moments, which, if I am not mistaken, will not more than suffice for any worldly or other concerns which you may have upon your mind to settle.'

"'My mind is full of horror,' cried the dying man, 'and I am incapable of preparing for death.'

"He now fell into an agony, accompanied with a shower of tears; a cordial was administered, and he revived in a degree; when, turning to the physician, who had his fingers upon his pulse, he eagerly demanded of him, 'if he did not see that blood upon the foot-curtains of his bed.' There was none to be seen: the physician assured him it was nothing but a vapor

of his fancy. 'I see it plainly,' said Antetheus, 'in the shape of a human hand: I have been visited with a tremendous apparition. As I was lying sleepless in my bed this night, I took up a letter of a deceased friend to dissipate certain thoughts that made me uneasy: I believed him to be a great philosopher, and I was converted to his opinions; persuaded by his arguments and my own experience, that the disorderly affairs of this evil world could not be administered by any wise, just or provident being, I brought myself to think that no such being could exist, and that a life, produced by chance, must terminate in annihilation; this is the reasoning of that letter, and such were the thoughts I was revolving in my mind, when the apparition of my dear friend presented itself before me; and unfolding the curtains of my bed, stood at my feet, looking earnestly upon me for a considerable space of time. My heart sunk within me; for his face was ghastly, full of horror, with an expression of such anguish as I can never describe; his eyes were fixed upon me, and at length, with a mournful motion of his head—"Alas, alas!" he cried, "we are in a fatal error," and taking hold of the curtains

with his hand, shook them violently and disappeared. This I protest to you I both saw and heard ; and look ! where the print of his hand is left in blood upon the curtains !'

"A few hours later the poor man died in great agony."

Thus we see the danger of respectable young men of fine parts. Ambitious of applause, they venture into doubtful expedients to gratify their irreligious associates, and, step by step, resist their honest convictions, till finally, to justify themselves, they adopt infidel principles, and turn away from the house of God. This is the uniform history of the class of persons now under consideration. They fail to see that their way leads to misery and death, not to life or peace, imagining that they have more light than the fathers, or their pious cotemporaries. Instead of reasoning, they laugh, instead of consulting the word of God, they read skeptical books, forgetting that "whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." Is it not strange that people of ordinary self-love will do so, especially when they consider that they must soon die ?

We might mention the experiences of Vol-

taire and Thomas Paine, but these are too well known to require repetition in this place. It is not numbers that we seek, but facts. And the few facts given are sufficient to substantiate the truth of God's word on the subject under consideration.

The other class of extreme unbelievers named, who live and die in stupidity concerning their religious condition and destiny, is a very numerous one, we fear. Let us glance at a few cases, beginning with that of

JOHN JAMES ROUSSEAU.

We have here a man of peculiar experience, one of the most skeptical of French writers, born at Geneva in 1712, a little after John Wesley. According to his own account, he was a villain from his youth. He abjured the Protestant religion, and turned Catholic, for which he says, "I was to receive subsistence," but afterward confessed that "nothing remained but the remembrance of having been both a dupe and an apostate." Speaking of his adulterous relations in one case, he says, "Guilty without remorse, I soon became so without measure."

Yet he seemed to have no sense of his character or condition, but died, saying to his wife :—

"Oh! my dear, how happy a thing it is to die, when one has no reason for remorse, or self-reproach." And then, appealing to God, he added, "Eternal Being, the soul that I am going to give thee back is as pure, at this moment, as it was when it proceeded from thee : render it partaker of thy felicity."

How perfectly does this prove the truth uttered by the prophet, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." (Jer. xvii. 9.) And that of St. Paul, "Many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ : whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things." (Phil. iii. 18, 19.) This poor man seemed to be utterly deceived in relation to his own real character and destiny.

And why should he not be ? He closed his eyes to all religious instruction, except what little he received from the Romanists for the sake of being fed from their table ; and

plunged himself into the vortex of sensuality. Young men who take this course, may be assured that any doctrinal opinions they may hold, are the products of their own carnality, and enmity to God, and will end in disappointment and eternal regret. One who is deceived by his misfortune is to be pitied, and will be, no doubt, by the God and Father of all; but one who deceives himself to gratify his own wicked ambitions or passions, to the overthrow of his honest convictions, will stand a poor chance to obtain mercy.

DAVID HUME

furnishes us another similar case of spiritual insensibility. He sustained a better moral character, though an infidel, and "died," says Gibbon, "like a philosopher." His death is the boast of infidels, and ranks with them like that of St. Paul among Christians, who deliberately declared, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness,

which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day." (2 Tim. iv. 6–8.)

"This was a happy ending of a long and useful life, devoted to the good of others and the glory of God. But Hume spent his last days in reading books of amusement, playing whist and joking about his departure. He could not see why he should be reluctant to enter the ferryboat which was to bear him across the river of death, for "he had no house to finish ;—he had no daughter to provide for,—he had no enemies upon whom he wished to avenge himself. . . . I have done everything of consequence which I ever meant to do. I could at no time expect to leave my relations and friends in a better situation than that in which I am now likely to leave them. I therefore, have all reason to die contented."

This is the model death of a philosopher, and an infidel. How unlike that of a Christian ! Taken at its best, it evinces a cold submission to destiny, and a blind venture in the dark. Who would prefer it for himself, his wife, or child, to that of the Christian, who can pray with triumphant joy, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according

to thy word ; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." "O death, where is thy sting ? O grave, where is thy victory ? . . . Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. xv. 55, 57.)

Bishop Horne, in writing to Dr. Adam Smith, with whom Hume played some of his last games, and cracked his last jokes, well says :—

"Are you sure, and can you make us sure, that there really exists no such thing as a God, and a future state of reward and punishment ? If so, all is well. Let us then, in our last hours, read Lucian and play at whist . . . and die as foolish and insensible as our brother philosophers, the calves of the field, and the asses of the desert, as we can for the life of us. But, if such things be—as they most certainly are,—is it right in you, sir, to hold up to our view, as 'perfectly wise and virtuous,' the character and conduct of one who seems to have been possessed with an incurable antipathy to all that is called religion ?

"You would persuade us, by the example of David Hume, Esq., that Atheism is the only cordial for low spirits and the proper antidote against the fear of death. But surely, he who

can reflect with complacency, on a friend thus misapplying his talents in his life, and then amusing himself with Lucian, whist and Charon, at his death, may smile over Babylon in ruins, esteem the earthquake which destroyed Lisbon an agreeable occurrence, and congratulate the hardened Pharaoh, on his overthrow in the Red Sea. Drollery in such circumstances, is neither more nor less than,

> 'Moody madness, laughing wild,
> Amid severest woe.'

"This is a just view of the subject, but the fiendish recklessness of Hume is more glaring, when it is remembered that he admitted the possibility that he might be in error, and that religion, after all, might turn out to be true. How a man possessed of the slightest regard for his race, could use his great influence to alienate men from God in his life, and apply his dying breath to encourage them to imitate his example, unless he was utterly abandoned of God, it is impossible to imagine. If a sinner had a number of lives to live, and might repair the errors of the first in the second, the case would be different. But having only one life in which to prepare himself to meet God,

and enjoy his presence and blessing forever, no man, it would seem, could encourage any risk with regard to it, unless he is in sympathy with the devil, who 'goeth about seeking whom he may devour.'"

If this be a correct estimate of the case, it affords room for solemn reflection to many who are not Atheists, but who reject experimental religion, and use their influence to induce others to do the same, on the presumption that all men will be saved, or, at least, all moral and respectable men, particularly, if they observe certain religious ceremonies. The Bible gives no encouragement to any one that he will be saved unless he shall be "born again," "born of the Spirit." According to the theory of all these parties, Christians are safe, because they are included in the *all*, whether taken in its broadest sense, or under the restrictions named.

But if the Bible view be correct, these parties, though not Atheists, will be lost, because they reject the new birth, and will not seek the Lord, and believe in the only begotten Son of God, that they may be saved. And so far as their influence goes, they endanger the salva-

tion of others. In advising us to accept their views and practices, they ask us to give up what they admit to be a certainty, for what they cannot deny to be something of an uncertainty, namely, that all men are to be saved irrespective of their character, or on other conditions than those of repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

But *we*, in proposing to them to become Christians, offer them what they allow to be a *certainty* for an uncertainty. And all that we require them to give up is *sin*, so that all they will lose by the operation, should their opinions finally prove to be correct, is the difference between sin and holiness, loyalty and disloyalty. But St. Paul, who was converted from sin and superstition to God, and had experience on both sides of the question, informs us that "Godliness is *profitable* unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." (1 Tim. iv. 8.) And this is confirmed by the experience of all true Christians.

CHAPTER XXII.

A RELIGIOUS LIFE CONTRASTED WITH A LIFE OF IMPENITENCE.

TRUE religion is not natural to man, though he evinces a sense of moral obligation not apparent in lower orders of being. Indeed, it is distasteful to him, so that, as a matter of fact, "There is none righteous (naturally), no, not one: There is none that seeketh after God. There is none that doeth good." (Rom. iii. 10–12.) The reason assigned for this is, that "The carnal mind is enmity against God,"—that "the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." He does not, therefore, glide into religion from the promptings of his own nature as he does into sin, and can become religious only by resisting his proclivities, and following his judgment and conscience.

Hence, religion not being an element in our fallen nature, is necessarily an attainment; and must have a beginning in the experience of each individual. Its first suggestion comes from God through one or more of the agencies which

he has ordained for the purposes of instruction and conviction. But its acceptance or resistance lies with the sinner himself. Those who accept it on the terms proposed, become Christians, and realize the benefits flowing therefrom, while those who reject it, assume all the responsibility of their natural depravity, and take the chances of a life of rebellion. The benefits of becoming religious in youth are many:—

1. It saves from the corrupting influence of frivolous and ungodly associates. One of the first and most reasonable things for a repenting sinner to do, is to abandon his old companions, though they may be his nearest relations. He must forsake father, mother, brother, sisters and all others, if necessary. Not only risking their rejection of him, but withdrawing from them as companions, to find more congenial fellowships. If he has not interest enough in the object of his pursuit to do this, he will not succeed. Having obtained the witness of his acceptance with God, he will avoid them from aversion to their spirit and manners, as well as from his new affinity for Christian society. Thus, religion saves from one of the greatest dangers of life, namely, bad company.

Most people are too weak to resist the temptations connected with such companionships. The profanity, vulgarity and intemperance of their friends may shock them for a time, but if they continue with them they will be likely to fall into the popular current, and outstrip their tutors. This has been the experience of thousands, who have died in poverty and disgrace. But where these extreme results are avoided, such associations involve the loss of time and the misapplication of noble powers to unworthy ends, and lay the foundation of fruitless regrets in after life, to say nothing of eternity.

2. It gives a new aspect to social life. The natural man is selfish and seeks his own. Renewed by the grace of God, he becomes kind and benevolent. One of the first promptings of true religion is to do something for the benefit of *others*. "What shall I render unto the Lord," it asks, "for all his benefits?" It creates a becoming ambition to acquire knowledge, influence and personal capacity, to appropriate to the cause of God and humanity. Many of the most benevolent men of the ages were penurious and mean, until they were born again. That gave them a new view of

their responsibilities, and set them to work for the happiness and salvation of their fellow-men.

3. It quickens and strengthens the mental faculties. Men of learning give it the credit for much of their success. That celebrated linguist, Dr. Adam Clark, testifies thus :—

"After I found the peace of God, I may safely assert, that I learned more in *one day* than I could formerly in *a month.* And no wonder ; my soul began to rise out of the ruins of the fall, by the favor of the Eternal Spirit. I found that religion was the gate to true learning, and that they who went through their studies without it, had double work to do."

4. It is profitable in a worldly point of view. It gives more health, wealth, strength, capacity for thought and labor,—more and better food, clothing, houses and domestic comforts; and yet more rest and leisure. We lately summoned witnesses in a strange congregation to testify of what they *knew* by personal experience of its benefits, in contrast with a life of sin. The first called was a moral man before he was converted, who had been in the service of God about one year, which he pronounced

"the *happiest* of his forty years of life." The second was a man of considerable means and unequalled for practical benevolence in the place. "Religion," he said, "found him many years ago a miserable rumseller and toper, without funds or credit. It made him sober, industrious, enterprising, successful and happy. It had given him health, a pleasant home, houses and lands, many friends, and an honorable standing in society, great peace in believing, and a joyful hope of a blessed immortality." The third man declared that "he was a drunkard of thirty-five years' sad experience,—had not been in a church for eight years. But being invited to come here, I sought the Lord and experienced such a change in my feelings that I stopped drinking without an effort, all appetite for strong drink being taken away. I am a saved man. All who have known me during the last few years, know that what I say is true."

Ques. "Did you use to swear?" I inquired. "If so, what effect did religion produce in regard to this habit?"

Ans. "I swore terribly when angry, but this wonderful change took all inclination to that

practice away from me, and I have not sworn since it occurred."

Q. "And how about your temper,—do you get angry as before?"

A. "No, not at all. Somehow, the severest provocations have failed to excite me. I have been surprised at myself to see the difference between now and formerly in this respect."

Q. "Do you see any change in your temporal circumstances?"

A. "Yes, formerly I earned less money, and spent most of it for drink, leaving myself and family pinched for food, clothes and other necessaries; but since I was converted, we have abounded in worldly comforts."

Q. "Have you found more, or less, pleasure in life, since the change of which you speak transpired?"

A. "More, an hundredfold,—I have taken more comfort during the last year than in all my life before."

Q. "But don't you find it very expensive, being a Christian, and belonging to the church?"

A. "I have contributed as I have had the means, to our expenses and benevolences, but

as compared with the expense of sin, I can say, 'Godliness is profitable.' Then, I have had more means,—have earned more and saved more. Religion has kept me out of bad company and expensive scrapes."

Q. "You have known most of the members of *this* church for many years. You knew them when in sin, and have marked their course since, though you were an outsider until one year ago. What, according to your knowledge and belief, has been the effect of their conversion on their temporal circumstances ? "

A. " Yes, I have known most of them as long as they have known themselves, and I am satisfied that many of them were not worth a dollar before they were converted. That gave them a start. They left off drinking and frolicking, went to work, and are now comfortably off. Many of them own their homes, beside considerable other property,—are in honorable business, and have good prospects for the future."

Being at another place, I deemed it expedient to repeat this exercise, and called out several witnesses whose testimony was generally in harmony with the foregoing. I will not

repeat it. But one of them was a youngerly man of marked characteristics, who informed me afterward that several of his brothers were desperate drunkards. His testimony was nearly as follows:—

Q. "Mr. B., you have heard what we have claimed for religion, as an experience and practice, do you *know* anything about it?"

A. "I do."

Q. "Will you please state what you *know?*"

A. "I *know* that nine years ago I was a sinner, without God and without hope in the world. I was a hard drinker,—a drunkard. I was a Sabbath breaker,—kept my shop open, like most others of my craft, on Sunday. I did not attend any church. But I was induced one evening to come to this place, where I heard that which impressed me with a sense of my wickedness. I came again and again, and finally asked the prayers of the church, and sought the Lord the best I could in my condition. At length, there came such a change over me as I had never felt before, making me very happy, and giving me complete power over my evil appetites and passions. I felt that I was 'born again,' and was a child of God. I went to

my shop and put out a sign, reading, 'THIS SHOP WILL NOT BE OPENED ON SUNDAY,' though Sunday was my best day for business, and I have been trying to live a Christian ever since."

Q. "You say that you *knew* that you were a *sinner*. How did you *know* that?"

A. "I *felt* it,—felt guilty and condemned. Then I knew that I had broken God's commands,—broken the Sabbath, taken his name in vain, and was all out of harmony with his will. The Holy Spirit seemed to impress these convictions upon me."

Q. "How did the evidence of your conversion differ from that which convinced you that you were a sinner?"

A. "I *felt* that I was pardoned. The impression seemed to be made on my heart that I was accepted and adopted into the family of God. And then I *knew* that I was trying to keep the commandments and please God, whereas before, I broke them every day. And, besides, I *felt* that I loved God,—his people and word, his Sabbaths and worship. Before I was averse to all these things, and wondered how anybody could enjoy them. Looking back

upon the scene, I can adopt the language of Charles Wesley :—

> 'Long my imprison'd spirit lay,
> Fast bound in sin and nature's night:
> Thine eye diffused a quickening ray ;
> I woke ; the dungeon flamed with light :
> My chains fell off, my heart was free,–
> I rose, went forth, and follow'd Thee.'

Q. "You say that you drank excessively before your conversion. Did the change you speak of take away your appetite for liquor ?"

A. "No, I could drink a glass now with as good a relish as ever, but it gave me power to resist the temptation which I had not before. The appetite sometimes comes upon me with urgent demands for indulgence, but I have been able thus far to resist it,—I have not tasted of a drop since."

Q. "Is the same true with regard to anger and swearing ? "

A. "No, they dropped off of me, I know not how ; but I have had no temptation or impulse toward either, though they were terrible enemies to manage before. Where I would then have been in a rage, I am now calm and undisturbed."

Q. "But religion *did* damage your business ? "

the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea."

We are safe in his hands. He is too wise to make a mistake, too good to neglect our interests, and too mighty to be frustrated in doing whatever may be necessary to our welfare. Nothing could be more appropriate than such a God, for such weak and defenceless creatures. But those who deny his existence, or assume the attitude of hostility to him, exclude themselves from the conscious benefits of his protection.

Some *trouble*, in our circumstances, seems to be necessary. Capel says, "It is one of God's greatest mercies that this world is full of trouble: for if we so much court her now she is foul, what should we do if she were beautiful." God seems obliged to deny us many things that we deem desirable, to make us willing to receive something better. "This is a marvellous thing," says Chrysostom, "that, not by the things that seem to us for our security, but by their very opposite, all comes to be for our advantage. Unless the infants had been 'cast forth,' Moses would not have been saved." Nor would he have delivered his brethren from

bondage, or have been heard of outside of his neighborhood.

God will exempt us from trouble which is not necessary to our good, and sustain us under such as he shall cause, or allow to transpire. Hence says the devout psalmist, "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee, he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved." (Psa. lv. 22.) "Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness." (Psa. cxii. 4.) St. Paul testifies to the truth of these declarations thus: "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed." (2 Cor. iv. 8, 9.) "Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing, . . . having nothing, and yet possessing all things." (vi. 10.) He had trouble enough to make him intensely miserable, but God comforted and sustained him, —"In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings, and in prisons."

Real Christians find similar support now. An old Presbyterian friend lately called at my study, and informed me of his financial disasters. I knew him in prosperity, when he felt

that his "mountain stood strong." But everything was now gone,—houses, lands, stocks, business; and he was poor,—without a dollar, and without a place. It seemed very hard. The frost of age had begun to gather upon his brow. I was sorry for him. "But," said he, "Doctor, I have found something better. God has filled me with the comfort of his presence—I am a happy man. If I could have my property back by giving up what I now enjoy, I would not think of it. I have a treasure laid up in heaven. God has wonderfully blest me in my afflictions. I have cast my burden upon the Lord, and he sustains me."

Take another case to the point. I was slightly acquainted with a Christian gentleman a few years ago in this city, who seemed healthy and prosperous. I met him recently, clambering up a long flight of stairs on two crutches, with a small bag, hanging by a strap from his neck, in which he had a few little Testaments and other things for sale. I was surprised at the change. With some emphasis I asked, "*How do you do?*" to which he responded, quick as thought; "*Happy!* HAPPY IN GOD!" He was evidently feeble, and poor

in worldly goods, but rich in Christian graces. God was with him, yea, *in* him,—he was "filled with the Spirit," and rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory. We saw many Christian ministers that day, but no one seemed so satisfied as did this afflicted brother.

6. The superior happiness of the Christian should commend religion to the favorable consideration of the race. It is natural and right for us to desire to be happy. God has made us to be so, and provided for it. Indeed, he commands us to "*rejoice evermore.*" He is more pleased and honored when we are delighted with him and his government, than when we are fearful, or fretful and complaining. Religion brings us into filial relations to him, in which we obey and love him as our *Father*, and feel that he loves and approves us, as his *adopted children.* In this condition, we are conscious heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ to an inheritance that is incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us.

7. And who can reasonably distrust the revealed facts of this inheritance, to be developed and enjoyed in a future state? Having

tested so many propositions of God's word in reaching a joyful life of holiness, and found them true beyond our highest anticipations, it is not difficult to accept others which portray things to come, reaching far out into eternity. But it is said they are incomprehensible. We admit it, but that is true of God's prophecies and promises generally. Who comprehended the flood, or the destruction of Nineveh, Babylon or Jerusalem, or the birth and work of Christ before they transpired? What sinner ever comprehended the new birth and spiritual life until he realized them in his own soul? The revelation of heaven, with its unspeakable pleasures and companionships, is no more unbelievable than many other promised or predicted events which have already come to pass. Hence the Christian, having proved the Scriptures to be true in several of its strongest declarations, readily believes what they promise for the future, and rejoices in the hope of the glory of God. Thus our late lamented President Garfield was "not afraid to die."

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